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The Black Cat

Vol. XIX APRIL, 1914 No. 7

The Soul of a Dog

BY H. D. COUZENS

Do you love dogs? Then you will appreciate and enjoy to the last word this dramatic story of "Trichie" who "went the whole way" and earned her place in the happy hunting grounds of man's best friend.

MY companion and I were strolling through Bronx Park as he told me about his life in Southern California. He talked animatedly, interestedly, and I listened with interest on my part for we had not met since we had been at college and he had much to tell of his farm in a new country and his young wife whom I had never seen. Following, I suppose, the stream of people, but at least without conscious design, we had entered one of the buildings and walked along with the human tide, still talking, coming to an involuntary pause before a glass case.

Suddenly Armstrong ceased speaking. I glanced at him and saw his jaw had dropped and his eyes were starting with horror. He was clutching the rail before him so tightly that his knuckles seemed about to break through the skin. His whole body was rigid with fearful fascination, his eyes fixed on the glass before him. Following his gaze I saw that we were before a cage of diamond-back rattlesnakes. One of them was coiled on the shelf in the cage and its hideous upreared head was on a level with our eyes, slowly swaying from side to side. With his gaze still fixed on the reptile Armstrong stooped slightly, his hands in a clutching position, his body trembling and alert in exactly the pose of a football player about to tackle an adversary. I touched him on the shoulder and he started violently. There were great beads of perspiration on his forehead and he wiped them away with his handkerchief. The crowd was beginning to jostle. "Come on, Jack," said I, "let's get out of this!"

We walked by the cages of the Australian dingoes and seated ourselves on a bench. Armstrong was still white and I could see that he had been badly shaken. "You seem to have an aversion to snakes," said I. "I'm not very fond of them myself, but—"

Armstrong laughed a little hysterically. "I guess I'm locoed," he interrupted apologetically. "I actually forgot where I was and all about everything but that damned thing in front of me. If I had known where we were going you couldn't have got me inside that place with wild horses."

He lit a cigar and smoked in silence for a while. One of the dingoes was within a few feet of the bars. Arm-

strong put out his hand, spoke a few coaxing words, and the slinking, furtive yellow beast came and, to my amazement, put his muzzle in Armstrong's hand and licked him. "Why," said I, "those beasts are as wild as wolves!" I stepped forward, reached out my own hand, and instantly the slant-eyed creature sprang back with a snarl and bared its teeth. Armstrong laughed quietly. "*You* can't do that, my boy! No use trying! You're city-bred and that chap will never cotton to you! You can never make love to a dog in the proper way till you learn to believe, 'way down, honest-to-God in your heart, that a dog has a soul!" He called once more and as the dingo came up reached through the bars and patted it on the head.

"You seem," said I, "to be playing the animal kingdom today for your long suit."

"So I do; that's a fact. I'm really sorry I acted so loco over that snake, but the snake and dog part of it all belong to one story and, if you like, I'll explain."

I nodded for I was anxious to hear. He was good to look at, this friend of mine, and good to listen to, with his big bronzed face, deep kindly eyes, and mellow voice, and he was, moreover, one of the men who seldom speak unless they have something to say. He puffed at his cigar and continued: "You see, when we moved over into Imperial Valley, Nancy and I had been married about a year, and though there was a whole lot to do on the ranch, more than there ought to have been for a woman, the place hadn't begun to be settled and it was pretty lonesome for her as I couldn't be with her much of the time and there weren't any kiddies coming along, which was a real tragedy then as we'd naturally looked forward to a young Armstrong or two about the place. The curse of a new, big country like that is loneliness, especially to the women, and I tell you there were times when I felt like a beast that first year when I saw the worry-lines creeping into the little girl's face and realized the childless lonesomeness that she wouldn't have owned up to for the world. If she hadn't begged and pleaded with me I'd have thrown up the proposition and gone back to the city, but of course we've got young Jack now and the place pays like a house a-fire and we're both glad we stuck it out.

"Well, on one of my trips to Los Angeles I picked up and brought home a little, round fuzzy ball of a fox-terrier pup. If a man cares about dogs, and a man isn't much good that doesn't, there's nothing in the world that will win right up next to him like a puppy, especially a fox-terrier, but this one was the most lovable little thing I've ever seen. I had other dogs about the place—a greyhound that I used to run down coyotes a liver and white pointer, and a rather doubtful bull-terrier—but they were rough customers and we never allowed them in the house. The little puppy, though, became at once an intimate member of the family. I had an idea when I got her that she would interest Nancy and be some little relief from the God-forsaken loneliness, but I never dreamed how much that tyke was going to mean to us both.

"There are dogs and dogs, you know, and their characters are as distinctive and individual as are those of humans. The greyhound, for example, had only one business in life—to chase coyotes and jack-rabbits. He cared for nothing else and dreamed coyotes and rabbits in his sleep. There wasn't an ounce of affection or loyalty in that slim, small-brained head of his. If I had caressed him he would have misunderstood my intentions entirely. The pointer was carefully trained to hunt; he loved it and it was a passion to him. Unlike the greyhound

he was always looking for approval in an ingratiating sort of way, appreciated praise and courted it, but his chief interest was in hunting and he had mighty little use for me unless I had my gun with me. The bull was a man's dog entirely; a happy-go-lucky chap, always keen for a romp or a run, poking his nose into gopher holes, chasing road-runners, generally full of nervous energy and always a thorough gentleman. Nancy bored him because she lacked those man-to-man qualities, the hail-fellow-well-met roughness that is the ideal of a man's dog. His delight was to set his teeth into something and worry it by the hour, and he would bring an old strap or a piece of rope and beg you to hold it while he grabbed on, shut his eyes, and tugged at the other end.

"But the little tyke was altogether different. She had the thing we call charm developed to a remarkable degree. Her body was pure white, her head an evenly marked brown and black with brown 'bees' over her eyes, and there was more eloquence and appeal in those bees than I've ever seen in another dog's face. We called her 'Bee' at first, then extended this to 'Beatrice,' Nancy giving it the Italian twist, and finally it simmered down to 'Trichie'. I suppose all this talk about a little dog sounds trifling and silly to you but to us, 'way out there trying to make the desert bloom like the rose with only a Chinese cook and two sweaty hired-men for company, it was another story, and that pup grew into a place in our affections second only to what we would have felt for a kid of our own.

"I suppose you know a dog brought up out-of-doors with other dogs is one thing and another raised indoors with humans is quite different. Trichie soon rid herself of the objectionable features of most dogs. She learned to wipe her feet and not track mud into the house, and not to bounce and paw over us and leave footprints on our clothes. She was dainty and absolutely clean. The only affectionate greeting we allowed was one touch on a cheek with the tip of her little pink tongue. We acted toward her and spoke to her just as though she had been a child, gravely explaining what we wanted done and then if she did not understand showing her how to do it. At first she would listen to us with almost painful intentness, the brown bees raised and a wistful look in her eloquent eyes that was really pathetic, but before long she had a working knowledge of more words and phrases than we could count. She did things as a matter of course once they were explained or shown to her, without any wasted effort or a bark too many or too little and she had the doggy tactfulness of never being in the way and doing the right thing in the right place. She understood our moods and adjusted herself to them, and heart and soul she loved us. We were her whole world and all there was in it. She never fooled with the other dogs, and her interest in the cook and hired men was merely perfunctory.

"She was as near human as a dog can be. There was something that looked out of her wistful eyes that wasn't dog at all. It made us ashamed to put her through her paltry tricks. Of course we taught her all the usual fool capers but she hated them and always went through them unwillingly. Believe me, dogs as a rule are not nearly as bright as most people think. They have far less intelligence and initiative than they are given credit for. This pup of ours, having these qualities in an advanced degree, made me understand this better. Though she hated the paltry tricks we had taught her she would play hide-and-seek, a game that she practically taught herself with our collaboration, by the hour. She would lie on the bed, her head on her paws, her body twitching

and quivering with excitement, while Nancy hid herself somewhere close by in order not to make the game too difficult. When Trichie was called she would tip-toe from one place to another till she found her, bark and dance with joy, and bounce back on the bed for another try. A simple little thing, you think, of course, but at least it showed initiative and understanding and I am explaining all this because if I don't, you won't get the point of the story and what I said about the soul of a dog. Another example of what I mean is this: like all female dogs she was excessively selfish and jealous. She could not bear any attention shown to the other dogs or apparently to any living thing. Swipes, the bull-dog, had the incurable habit of chasing chickens, usually aided and abetted by the pointer, but Trichie never molested anything and snubbed all the live-stock about the place as she did the other dogs, till one summer Nancy raised a brood of tiny bantams which were so tame that the instant she showed herself out-of-doors they would fly in a little cloud, like a covey of quail, onto her arms and shoulders, and she fed them from a basket of wheat in her lap. One day, returning from a ride, we found a dead bantam near the house, then another, and finally the whole brood, all dead, and killed with a single bite through the head. I thought, naturally, that the other dogs had done it till Trichie came to greet us, and her expression was sufficiently eloquent to establish her guilt on the spot. Nancy cried and scolded her and Trichie turned her back, looked off at the distant hills with a bored expression, and blinked. She took her licking stoically without the least sign of repentance.

"That was the only real crime she ever committed and I was too tickled with the performance to blame her much for it, but she was wise enough to make herself mighty scarce for a while till Nancy's ire blew over and she knew herself forgiven. Then she unobtrusively stole her way back into her established place as favorite and once more slept with her head serenely pillowed on Nancy's foot when Nancy was reading or sewing. There was a thorough understanding between the three of us, and you can imagine how much the little creature meant to Nancy and me when I tell you that there are very few human beings in this world I could care half as much about as I did that dog.

"I came home one afternoon toward sunset and found Trichie sitting on the step, waiting for me as usual. Nancy told me that one of the calves had strayed from the corral and disappeared, and I set off to find it before dark, taking Trichie with me. The other dogs were off with the men at the other end of the ranch, larking about on some newly ploughed land. Back of the house was a deep draw, or 'wash', as we called it out there, and as I could see nothing of the calf on the level desert about us I followed up the edge of the wash for about a quarter of a mile, when suddenly I saw it ahead at the bottom, tearing away at the leaves of some low shrubs. The sides of the wash were here about twenty feet deep and quite steep but I immediately started to descend, scrambling and sliding, till presently I lost my footing and coasted to the bottom on a small avalanche of pebbles and dirt.

"I brought up on my feet with a jar that rattled my teeth. My back was against the perpendicular wall and I was lightly wedged into a V-shaped cut. Trichie had slid down between my feet. I stood gasping for wind and the next instant froze stiff and immovable with horror. Directly facing me, on a level with my chest, was the monstrous head of a diamond-back rattlesnake. The creature was coiled on a rock. At the

disturbance of my fall it reared its hideous head and a third of its nine-foot length, and its enormous rattle was buzzing furiously. Now I never had been afraid of snakes. I had the normal, healthy hatred of them that we all have and destroyed them whenever they crossed my path, but till then all the advantage had been on my side. Here the conditions were reversed—I hadn't the ghost of a show. I had tumbled right out of life, as it were, face to face with death in shocking and loathsome form. I do not, and never have understood the mystery of a rattlesnake or any other venomous snake for that matter. Like Soloman, the 'way of a serpent on a rock' is too many for me. My first thought, after the shock of fear was over, was of the monstrous injustice of that awful, senseless thing having the power to blindly murder me as I stood. Its glittering, hateful little eyes gleamed wickedly not two feet from me, and let me tell you, son, that very few men who have ever lived have looked so close into the cold insensate eyes of a snake and lived to tell of it. I mean where there is no glass between and the snake had them absolutely at its mercy.

"Trichie had cowered down behind my feet, squeezing her small body between me and the wall behind. She was shivering in mortal terror and I could not see but could feel her little head peaking around the calf of my leg at the sinister thing on the rock. She did not whine or whimper but shook as though her small body would rack to pieces. I stood flattened, fixed, immovable against the rock. I knew that I had no chance whatever. The snake would neither crawl away nor allow itself to be distracted, and sooner or later it would strike. It would strike on the smallest movement. Somewhere nearby the calf was bawling. I was conscious that the sun was setting, throwing a warm tinge over the snow on the mountains; that a short distance away Nancy was singing as she helped Ah Fai with supper, and that the world was very fair and good to live in.

"All this takes time to tell, but I don't suppose I stood there more than twenty or thirty seconds. The tension was terrific. My nerves and muscles were strained to their uttermost pitch. Pains began to shoot through me, and then I knew I was going to move. I could not help it—I could feel the spasm coming—and at the same instant the frightful, poisonous thing before me seemed to feel it, too. I saw the great fat coils tighten and set and little lithe muscles play up and down its up-raised length, then the head drew back and the gaping jaws opened.

"Trichie still stood shivering between my feet. She saw and knew that she, herself, was not menaced in any way. She could have jumped clear and been free, but stood in instinctive, deadly terror of the snake which could not have struck her if it had tried. I can't describe to you the revulsion, the loathing, and the protest of body and spirit in that fraction of a second as the thing struck. The instant that it did so, Trichie, with a a scream, launched herself full at the monster. It was as pure an act of heroism and self-sacrifice as ever happened. It diverted the whole situation. The blow missed me altogether, the dog and snake rolled off the rock in a heap, and I jumped away from the cliff as though I'd been shot."

Armstrong paused and re-lit his cigar. The hand that held the match was trembling and he puffed the smoke spasmodically.

"I hadn't a weapon on me, not even a knife, but when I saw the snake strike the dog again and again, blindly, insensately, I went utterly, recklessly mad. I threw myself on the thrashing,

writhing thing, caught it behind the head, killed it with my bare hands. Not satisfied with this I stamped on it, cursing hysterically, and finally beat it to pieces on the rock.

"I carried Trichie, a bloated, swollen thing, home in my arms. Her eyes never left my face and just before I reached the gate she raised up, just touched my face with the tip of her dainty tongue, and died."

Armstrong smoked for a while in silence. The dingo came to the bars and looked at him, wistfully.

"I dare say the thing sounds overly sentimental to you. Nancy thinks I'm a trifle mad because I see red when I encounter a rattler and have waged a continual warfare on them ever since, and I guess after my exhibition over there you are inclined to agree with her, but even now she can't talk about Trichie without tears. Our house was a real house of mourning for a time, and we buried the little dog as tenderly and sorrowfully and respectfully as she deserved.

"Do you wonder that I believe that dogs have souls?" and he patted the dingo on the muzzle.

Madeline—Home Wrecker

BY ROTHVIN WALLACE

Bachelors and henpecked husbands, attention! Here is the joyous account of the fall and confusion of a suspicious wife. We expect this story will be read aloud in certain quarters.

HE wretch!" exclaimed Mrs. Richard Browning Haverford, with much emphasis and a deal of expressiveness. "Oh-h, the wretch!" she repeated softly, with contracted eyelids and a sharp, sibilant exhalation.

"Did madame call?" inquired her maid, appearing at the doorway.

"No," said madame shortly.

Then little Mrs. Richard Browning Haverford—Polly for short—flung herself into a deep-seated chair in her boudoir, and, with silken negligee in disarray and chestnut hair disheveled, did an exceedingly feminine thing. She cried.

"Did madame call?" inquired the ubiquitous and somewhat inquisitive maid again, as she stood at the door for the second time.

"No," said Polly, in exasperation. "I desire to be alone."

"Yes, madame," said the maid humbly, as she withdrew.

If she were curious concerning this emotional outburst on the part of her mistress, she might be excused as, indeed, it was quite unusual. But Polly's provocation was as unusual as were her actions. She brushed a tear from her cheek, and recovered the source of all her trouble from the floor, where it had fallen in the first throes of her lachrymosal grief. She held the horrid note before her, clenched tightly in her small hand, and, with a lugubrious expression on her pretty face, read it over again:

"Dear Dick,

Meet me at noon tomorrow at the Rittenhouse, in Philadelphia. Thompson will be there, and we can go out and have a look at his Madeline. And say, old fellow, she's a peach—all those graceful lines that you admire, and speed enough to suit even your fastidious taste. Thompson says he's tired of her, so he will be glad if you will take her off his hands. He assures me that you won't find her at all expensive to keep. So don't fail to be on hand, old chap, and the prize is yours.

Faithfully,
Bob."

"The beasts!" said Polly when she had finished reading, allowing her arms to swing limply at her sides and the bit of paper to flutter again to the floor.

So this was the climax of her year of blissful married life. Ah, the bitterness of it all, when she looked back upon the beatific days that had been hers—and Dick's, too, she had thought. Only an hour before, she had been, she believed, the happiest woman alive. Then she had kissed Dick a fond good-bye, as he departed for Philadelphia, *on business*. A few minutes later she had gone to straighten up his room with her own little hands, as was her custom, and had found this—this terrible note on the bed, where it doubtless had fallen from one of his pockets.

"Oh, what shall I do?" she sobbed.

Of course it was all over. Never, never, *never* could she see Dick Haverford again. And yet the thought gave her a pang that brought on a new fit of weeping. But then, the inevitable must be met. The man whom she had worshipped as the quintessence of all that was good and noble and loyal and pure, had crumbled into the kind of being that she loathed and hated and despised, with every sentient thought. He—her Dick—was planning, deliberately, to obtain another woman—a "peach," with "graceful lines" and "speed," who would not be "expensive to keep."

She pronounced the hateful terms of the note with scornful disdain. So, her Dick was that sort of a man. Polly had heard other women talk about men who did such things, but never did she think that a creature of that ilk was embodied in the husband that she loved.

"What—what *shall* I do?" she sobbed again.

An idea! Bob had written the note—Bob, who had been best man at their wedding and who professed to be their dearest friend. Bob had led her Dick astray, had destroyed her happiness, and —well, she would get even with him. His wife should know of his perfidy. She would telephone to Nellie at once and have her come right over.

"P-p-poor D-Dick," she whimpered, as she fumbled the leaves of the telephone directory, "I don't b-b-believe he wanted to do it, at all. That—that horrid Bob Carleton just m-made him."

So she took down the receiver, and with nerves aquiver, waited to pour her woes into Nellie's ear. But Nellie's maid informed her that Mrs. Carleton had just gone out, so, with a sinking heart and a bursting head, she threw herself down at her desk and buried her face in her arms.

Suddenly, Polly sat upright, and her face had a stern look. This, she reasoned, was no way for an insulted, outraged wife to act. She should be calm and dignified, and conceal her feelings. She would pack her belongings and take a room at a quiet, inexpensive hotel, before Dick's return that night. Then she would interview a reliable lawyer and have the matter adjusted as speedily as possible.

With her mind thus made up, Polly lost no time in further repining, and, in her subsequent activities, she found her first transitory surcease from the ache of her wounded heart. First, she wiped her eyes, bathed them with cologne, and dabbed powder on her nose. Then she called her maid. To that surprised individual she explained that she was going away on a visit, and the next few minutes found them emptying drawers and closets of their feminine apparel, which they crowded into trunks and bags. In the midst of it all, the door bell rang.

"If it's anyone to see me," said Polly, "say that I'm not at home."

Then she listened as the maid answered the summons and perfunctorily followed her instructions.

"Well," said another voice, "if Mrs. Haverford returns in time, ask her to meet me for luncheon at—"

"Nellie! Nellie!" cried Polly, in a delirium of joy, as she gathered up her skirts and raced toward the door. "Oh, I've wanted to see you so badly!"

"I thought you were not at home," said Nellie, a trifle frigidly.

"Yes, I am—I was—I—oh, I don't know where I am."

The maid closed the door and regarded her mistress with an air of reproach.

"What *has* happened, dear?" said Nellie soothingly. "You seem nervous."

"Nervous? Yes, I am nervous. Oh, it's dreadful—dreadful!"

In the meantime they had entered Polly's boudoir, and Polly, with a significant nod, dismissed the maid.

"Why," said Nellie in surprise, "you are going away!"

"Yes—I—I'm going away, never, *never* to return," admitted Polly tragically.

"But where, dear? *Do* tell me what has happened. Why are you so excited? What is so dreadful?"

"They have gone to Philadelphia to—to buy a woman."

"They? Who?"

"Dick—Bob."

Nellie's face was a study. She was both interested and incredulous.

"You are hysterical, dear," she said.

"Maybe I am, but—oh, you don't know what it is to have your husband go off after a 'peach,' with 'graceful lines'; you don't know—yet. There—there is the evidence."

She handed Nellie the note and, through eyes swimming in tears, watched her read it.

"Well!" said Nellie, when she had finished, "this does look serious. What have you done?"

"P-packed my c-clothes," said Polly weakly.

"What for?"

"I—I'm going away."

"Nonsense!" scouted Nellie.

She had been married for five years, was five years Polly's senior, and, therefore, could be expected to take a more experienced view of the exceedingly grave situation.

"And then," continued Polly, "I'm going to get a d-divorce."

"Absurd," said Nellie, with superior wisdom.

"Do you mean to say that, after this, you are not going to divorce Bob?" asked Polly with surprise.

"I certainly shall not," said Nellie. "Poor little girl," she added tenderly, "it *has* been hard for you." She placed an affectionate arm around Polly's trembling shoulders and kissed her lightly on the forehead. "Now," she continued, "I'll tell you what we shall do.

"This note indicates that our precious husbands are to be at the Rittenhouse—hotel or club, I don't know which—at noon. The chances are that they will have luncheon there. And by one o'clock, my dear, you and I shall be there to join them."

"You and I join them?" repeated Polly. "Thank you," she stiffened, "I think too much of my pride and dignity."

"Now, don't talk of pride and dignity when your whole future happiness is at stake. Of course, if you don't love Dick—"

"I do love Dick," protested Polly, indignant at the inference. "That is, I did."

"Well, I didn't know," said Nellie. "So many women don't."

"I'm not that kind of a woman," flared Polly.

"Of course not, dear. Then it's your duty to save your husband, as it is my duty to rescue mine."

"But suppose—suppose," hesitated Polly, weakening, "we should meet that—that awful Madeline creature?"

"Well, if we do," said Nellie grimly, "you just leave matters to me. At any rate, we'll meet two much embarrassed young men. Now hurry, dear. We haven't much time."

And so Polly stifled her dignity, put away her pride, summoned her maid, and allowed herself to be dressed. When the task was completed she was an extremely pretty Polly, arrayed in the smartest of smart tailored suits and what she was prone to call a "perfect dream" of a hat.

"There," said Nelly admiringly, flecking a speck of powder from Polly's shoulder, "I'll back you against Madeline, peach or no peach."

"The—the huzzy!" said Polly, although smiling with satisfied vanity at the implied compliment.

"Where shall I send madame's trunks?" inquired the maid.

"The trunks? Oh," said Polly, "send them—no, don't send them anywhere—yet. I shall let you know this afternoon."

Nellie, in the meantime, had called a taxicab, and its whirring motor apprised them that its meter was doing duty.

"Really," said Nellie, "we must hurry."

At last Polly was on her journey, but her feelings in the matter were not at all clear. At one and the same time, she was reluctant and eager, angry and glad, regretful and grateful, sad and merry—just for all the world like the thoroughbred little woman that she was.

"My dear," said Nellie suddenly, "I believe you have a fever."

"No, not now," replied Polly. "It's a chill, now."

And Polly was actually shivering as they went across on the ferry. Safely ensconced in the Philadelphia train, however, she began to feel quite comfortable. Then, somehow, when the train began to move, she wished she hadn't come. Perhaps, after all, there was an explanation; at least, she might have waited. Well, anyway, it was too late to return.

"Oh, I'll tell them what I think of their conduct," remarked Mrs. Carleton musingly.

"Tell whom?" inquired Polly.

"Bob Carleton and Dick Haverford."

"Please be good enough to confine your unpleasant remarks to your own husband," said Polly coldly. "I am quite sure that poor Dick never would have gone to Philadelphia and this—this Madeline, if it had not been for Bob's evil influence."

"Indeed!" sniffed Nellie.

"Yes," added Polly triumphantly, "the note proves it. Your husband, Nellie Carleton, deliberately, wilfully and maliciously lured my poor, poor Dick into meeting this 'peach,' with 'graceful lines.' "

"My dear," retorted Nellie with gloating vindictiveness, "when a man allows himself to be lured from his own fireside, it's usually because the fire is out at home."

"I suppose the same might apply to you," snapped Polly.

"I've been married for five years," said Nellie sententiously.

After that, they didn't speak until the brakeman called North Philadelphia. In the meantime Polly had spent a miserable hour with her thoughts.

"We're there—here!" she gasped.

"Yes," said her companion shortly, looking disinterestedly out of the window.

"And Nellie," whispered Polly, "I—I didn't mean those—those mean things I said."

"Neither did I," replied Nellie.

They looked at each other, smiled foolishly, and clasped hands. When the train reached Broad Street Station, they again were the best of friends.

"Now for a taxi," said Nellie with the assertive assurance of a natural leader. "To the Rittenhouse," she directed the cabby when they were comfortably seated in one of those mechanical reincarnations of Ali Baba's forty thieves.

"Hotel or club, ma'am?" inquired the cabby, touching his cap unctuously.

"Both," interposed Polly.

"But—er—I can't divide the vehicle, ma'am, and—"

"The hotel, first," decided Nellie.

"I wonder," speculated Polly, looking vacantly into space as the machine got under way, "if this—this Madeline creature is a blonde or brunette. I'll bet she's a blonde—a big, coarse peroxide blonde—and wears huge earrings and rouges frightfully and—"

"Really," interrupted Nellie, "the dear boys have good taste."

The ride from the station was a short one, and, before Polly could find words to reply, the taxicab had drawn up before the hotel. A liveried servant opened the door, and Nellie sprang out, followed by her timorous companion. Nellie acted as spokesman and, after being assured by a polite clerk that neither Mr. Carleton nor Mr. Haverford was a guest at the house, she inquired for Mr. Thompson.

"Mr. Thompson is in his room, I think," replied the clerk.

Nellie sent up her card and they awaited his arrival in the parlor, for an interminably long time, too, they thought. Finally, a curpulent, elderly man lumbered pompously into the room, glaring through thick glasses. He was preceded by a bell boy, who led him to the place where the ladies were sitting.

"Mrs. Carleton?" inquired the man in a thick, gruff voice. "I am Mr. Thompson."

"You had—had an appointment with Mr. Carleton today?" ventured Nellie hesitatingly.

"I have not the honor of knowing any Mr. Carleton," he rumbled.

"Oh, then it's a mistake," hastened Nellie. "I—we are sorry to have troubled you. Come, dear."

She seized the frightened Polly by an arm and fled precipitously from the room.

"Er—er most extraordinary," grunted the surprised Mr. Thompson, as their forms vanished through the door.

"To the Rittenhouse—Club," gasped Nellie, as, breathless, they resumed their seats in the taxicab.

It required but a short space of time to traverse the few blocks that separated them from this fashionable rendezvous of Philadelphia's smart masculinity, and their experience at the hotel still was too fresh to allow any marked rejuvenation of courage. However, Nellie put on a bold front and rang the bell. A polite attendant answered the summons, but, unfortunately, he knew neither Mr. Carleton nor Mr. Haverford.

"Yes," he added, in reply to a question, "Mr. Thompson is a member. I regret, though, that he left not more than ten minutes ago."

"Did he have luncheon here?" asked Nellie eagerly.

"I believe he did, ma'am."

"Accompanied by two gentlemen?"

"And Madel—" Polly checked herself, in rosy confusion. Really, it would be quite indelicate and beneath her dignity to question a servant about such a creature. And of course, she couldn't have luncheon at a man's club.

"I'm not sure, ma'am," said the man, replying to Nellie. "I think—"

"Where did they go?" cried Nellie.

"Mr. Thompson left word that he could be reached by telephone at the Essington Club."

"Thank you," said Nellie. "We shall go there at once. But where is this club?"

"On the Delaware river, ma'am, about ten miles south of the city. You may go by trolley or train."

"Thank you," said Nellie again, "we have a taxicab."

A few minutes later they were speeding south in Broad Street.

"Suppose," said Polly apprehensively, "it is not the right Thompson, after all? Anyway, they probably are with that horrid Madeline person at this very minute."

"We'll find them," said Nellie grimly.

And then, as the taximeter clicked up another ten cents, indicating a total ot $1.80, she gave a little gasp and opened her purse.

"My dear," she said, "how much money have you?"

Polly removed a bundle of heterogeneous documents, a handkerchief, a pair

of gloves, a vanity box, and a few other odds and ends from her capacious handbag, jingled a bit of change in her hand, and said:

"Thirty-five cents."

"And I," said Nelllie tragically, "have only forty-nine."

"Click!" came from the taximeter, and the bill stood at $1.90. The chauffeur was whistling softly, the machine whizzed onward, and all the world seemed gay.

"What shall we do?" said Polly.

"Follow those men," said Nellie firmly. We've *got* to find them now."

"Or—or get arrested, I suppose," supplemented Polly with rueful resignation.

"Or get arrested," agreed Nellie with convincing finality.

"Oh, why did we come?" bewailed Polly.

"Why?" repeated Nellie with elevated eyebrows. "I should think you would ask yourself that question."

"It is your fault," flung back Polly.

"My fault, indeed! Why, I never would have dreamed of taking this crazy trip if you hadn't shown me that note. I called to take you to luncheon and this is the mess you have got me into."

"Well," said Polly meekly, with contrite spirit, "we'll have to keep on riding until we find Dick."

"Or Bob," added Nellie.

Just then, with a diabolical click, the indicator in the little box ahead of them pointed to two dollars. Nellie groaned, Polly sighed, and the taxicab sped jauntily on its way.

"Isn't it awful?" murmured Polly, as the meter said $2.10.

"Terrible!" exclaimed Nellie.

Words, however, were futile, and the two unhappy women sat for a long time in silence. The machine, after several turns, struck a stretch of fine macadam road and raced along with accelerated speed.

"Thirty-five cents," said Polly when the sum $3.40 was indicated on the dial.

"Forty-nine," droned Nellie in a sepulchral voice.

Another long period of silence, broken only by the whirring of the engine. Finally, their chauffeur swerved from the roadway, passed through a gate, and entered a narrow, shaded lane. Ahead of them they beheld the broad river, with dozens of pleasure craft at anchor.

"This is the place, ma'am," said the chauffeur, drawing up at the entrance to an old-fashioned, rambling structure.

Polly was swallowing hard at a lump that had risen in her throat, and Nellie wore a haunted look that was by no means reassuring. Neither had the courage to glance at the taximeter, and both, as they approached the club house, felt that this was their last chance.

"Is—is Mr. Carleton here?" asked Nellie in a strained, far-away voice as a servant appeared at the door.

"Not that hi knows of," answered the man with a decided cockney accent.

"Or Mr.—Mr. Haverford?"

"Hi'm not certain, ma'am, but—"

"Is Mr. Thompson here?" inquired Polly taking matters into her own hands. Then she held her breath. Much depended on the answer.

"Ow, yes, ma'am," replied the man quickly, evidently pleased that he could gratify the attractive visitors. "'E come 'arf an hour ago with two other gentlemen."

"They're here!" cried Nellie, flinging her arms around Polly's neck. "Where—where are they?"

"Hi'll show you," said the man, regarding his excited interrogator with no little curiosity.

He obligingly conducted them to the water-front, led them out on a small dock, and hailed a large motor boat that was moored alongside.

"Mr. Thompson," he called. "Hi've brought two ladies to see you, sir."

They waited, breathlessly, and presently, a thick mop of dark hair was raised from the cockpit, a comely face came to view, and a pair of striking eyes regarded them questioningly.

"Are you Mr. Thompson?" asked Nellie.

"That's what I am called," he said breezily with an agreeable smile.

"Well, I—I'm looking for Mr. Carleton."

"And I for Mr. Haverford," interposed Polly. "And both of us for—for Madeline," she added, clenching her small fists.

But Mr. Thompson had not caught the latter part of the remark, having dodged back into the cabin of the boat.

"I'll bet that woman's there," grated Nellie. "I'm going aboard."

Scarcely had she started, however, when a familiar figure popped up from the pit.

"Dick!" cried Polly, springing forward.

"Polly!"

He attempted to embrace her, but she suddenly remembered the purpose of her presence there and withdrew in haughty disdain. The next moment Bob Carleton, too surprised to speak, was at Dick's side, with Mr. Thompson lagging behind, a smiling observer.

"And now, Robert Carleton," said Nellie severely, "suppose you let us see this Madeline."

"You see her now," he replied dazedly. "But how did you—who told you—what—"

"Yes, stammer," interrupted his wife frigidly.

"I don't understand at all," he replied, giving every evidence of his perplexity. "Why are you here?"

"To see your Madeline."

"Well, look at her. She's not mine, though, but Dick's."

"Oh, Nellie!" cried Polly, plucking at her friend's sleeve and pointing to the bow of the motor boat.

Her face was wreathed in smiles for there, in brass letters, was the name—"Madeline."

"She's—it's a boat!" gasped Nellie, suddenly comprehending.

"Of course," said her husband.

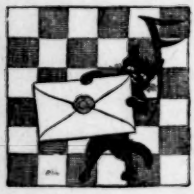
"And she's a peach, Poll," interposed Dick enthusiastically, turning to his wife. "Just look at those graceful lines."

"You dear!" cooed Polly, and Thompson, not caring to spy on Cupid's business, dodged into the cabin.

The Accusing Placard

BY ESTHER W. AYRES

If you were resting by a roadside opposite a big poster announcing $5000 reward for a man wanted for murder, and the man whose likeness appeared on the card popped up before your eyes—here's what would possibly happen.



FIVE thousand dollars reward! This man wanted for murder! The sight of this red and yellow poster, glaring from a tree trunk across the way was singularly disconcerting. However, it was a hot July afternoon, and the two mile walk from the end of the car line had been a tax on muscles weakened by illness; so I took off my coat, mopped my forehead, and lighting a cigarette, prepared to relax, and ignore the sinister placard.

But of course it wouldn't be ignored. The rock I had chosen to rest upon projected from a sloping bank, where toadflax and dusty daisies nodded in the tall grass. A broken fence, above, was the boundary of a neglected orchard that climbed a high hill. Opposite was a rocky cliff, possibly an old quarry,—all the scars hidden by clambering vines and bushes, with here and there a little tree springing hopefully on a ledge, and some larger ones at the base; but to right and left of this cliff, the road curved in such manner that unless I turned about and faced uphill, I was at the mercy of the face on the poster. So finally I yielded to its fascination and gave my imagination free rein in conjuring up visions of the crime from which the pictured murderer had fled.

I had just completed a highly-colored romance, when a rustling in the grass beyond the fence attracted my attention, and I looked back up the hill. But instead of the browsing goat or wandering dog I had expected to see, my gaze met that of a man who was crouching against the gnarled trunk of an apple tree.

His face was very white, very thin, with a curiously strained, anxious expression. Where had I seen the man before?

Suddenly it dawned on me! My eyes traveled quickly from his face to that on the placard, and back again. Involuntarily I jumped to my feet and seized my walking stick. The face that looked so furtively from the flaunting poster was the same that peered so watchfully from the hill!

I confess to a feeling of sudden weakness in the knees, irreconcilable with an equally instant impulse toward flight. Three ideas occurred to me with apparent simultaneity: He might be armed, and I had only my cane for defense; there was a $5000 reward for his apprehension, and I might be mistaken about him, after all.

As I stood rooted to the spot, the man rose to his feet and leaned against the tree with his hands behind him, never taking his frightened eyes from my face.

So he was not armed! My courage revived, and with it my curiosity; I no longer wanted to run away from this astounding encounter. But when I found speech, all I said was, "Well?"

It sounded alarmingly loud in that quiet spot, actually seeming to reverberate from the cliff across the way. His answer, except for a tinge of defiance, came back like an echo,—"Well?"

"What are you going to do?" I said lamely.

"What are *you* going to do?" he echoed, leaning a little forward, with a look of fearful expectancy.

I considered for a few moments, watching him fixedly. Should I yield to my growing curiosity and remain, what object would be attained? As a good citizen, I would not dare help him evade the law; yet—everything in me revolted at the thought of betraying so obviously wretched a creature.

"I am going home,—and *say nothing*!" I announced at length, significantly; and putting on my coat, I walked away. But before I had reached the curve there was a feeble rush of steps behind me, a hand was laid on my arm, and a husky voice gasped, "Sir, for God's sake—"

"You would much better not tell me anything," I said, facing him again.

As I turned, his hand dropped from my arm, and he swayed as if about to fall. I caught and steadied him, and he stood with his eyes closed, his face waxy white, and a pinched look about the nostrils that stirred me to prompt action. I dropped my stick and managed with one hand to extract a tablet from the emergency box in my pocket.

"Hold this in your mouth till it dissolves," I said peremptorily, pushing it between his lips.

He obeyed, and in a moment or two had recovered sufficiently to make his way, with my assistance, to the shaded rock.

"Are you hungry?" I asked, when his strengthening pulse showed me that the tablet had done its work. He nodded assent, making a queer little shamefaced grimace; and then while he munched the hard biscuits I happened to have with me, I lay back with my hat pulled over my eyes, and studied him, and the poster, and the situation in general, with increasing perplexity.

He could not have been more than twenty. His clear-cut, refined face was as smooth as a girl's. He had thin determined lips and a square chin; his forehead was broad and high, and his thick dark hair, just now rather tumbled, showed signs of care. Altogether, though hatless and collarless, he gave a distinct impression of being a "nice boy."

Yet the face on the placard, with all allowances made for crudity of outline and color, was a speaking likeness! As I studied it, I noticed something that had until now escaped my attention. Below the picture the paper was torn, so that the words,

FOR FURTHER PARTICULARS

were the last ones legible. Ah!—The relief of the thought brought me to a sitting posture. I had no means of knowing what person,—or government,—was advertising for this fugitive. I was at perfect liberty to let him tell me *what* he would, *if* he would,—and five months of illness and convalescence had engendered an appetite for adventure.

"Thank you," said the boy, finishing the last morsel of biscuit as he had eaten all,—with a deliberation most unusual in a starving man.

"It's 'dry fodder,' " I quoted lightly. "Is there a spring or a well, near by?"

"Not that I know of," he answered quietly. "I've been living for two days on June apples. They're quite juicy. Shall I get you some?"

"No thank you," said I, noting that as he rose to his feet he was still somewhat shaky. "Sit down, and tell me what I can do for you."

He looked at me amazedly, caught a quick breath, shot a sidelong glance at the placard across the way, and then putting his elbows on his knees, he plunged his hands into his hair and sat motionless for several minutes.

I looked at my watch. It was half-

past four, and I was a half-hour's walk, and then an hour's ride, from home. I had a lot of notes to prepare for to-morrow's lectures; but it did not seem wise to hurry my companion's confidence, so I waited.

Presently he lifted his head with a deep sigh.

"I need help," he said simply. "I'll tell you my story, and then, if you don't care to help me,—well, never mind."

"Shall we go up into the orchard?" I suggested.

"You're the only person who has passed this way in two days," he replied, "but still, perhaps we'd better."

Once seated in the tall grass beyond the fence, he began without preface, nervously tying knots in the long grass blades as he talked.

"It happened two years ago, one hot August night. I was alone in the house. *He* came in looking for my sister. They loved each other. He behaved very oddly, I thought. Presently, without any provocation, he fell upon me. I defended myself. Then—"

He flung away the knotted grasses, and again plunged his head into his hands. His voice came to me, muffled, desperate. "When I saw it was——all over—I ran away, like an idiot. I might have stood a chance,—then. It was self-defence, and he must have been insane. I've been around the world since,— and now, even in this out-of-the-way corner, —you see—" he jerked one hand despairingly toward the accusing placard.

Neither of us moved or spoke for some time. He was waiting for my response. What should it be? I did not for a moment doubt the truth of his story,—every accent carried conviction. Strangely enough, I felt no horror of this self-acknowledged criminal,—only the deepest pity. How dreadful that the lad should be a fugitive,—a price upon his head!

"Have you any idea who is offering that reward?" I asked at last, letting my tone carry some of the sympathy which I felt.

There was a shade of suspicion in the quick look he gave me, but it had vanished before he answered quietly: "I don't know,—but probably—*his*—people. The state would hardly take it up like that, now, do you think?"

"Sometimes,— in case all clues fail—" I hesitated. "What about your family —your sister?"

"My sister was all I had," said the boy. "I heard, accidentally, that she was ill. When I got there, she was—dead. I saw it in the paper."

Every word was evidently an effort. I sat silent for a while; but it was growing late, and we must reach some solution of the problem. I put my hand on his shoulder.

"I want you to feel that I believe you, —that you have my sympathy,—and my *silence*. Now tell me,—wouldn't it perhaps be best, after all, to give yourself up?"

"Oh, no, no!" he gasped, shrinking. He dropped his hands to his sides and turned a terrified face toward me.

"But this way," I argued, " you are in danger every moment,—hunted like a rabbit. It wouldn't be capital punishment—"

The lad made a violent effort at self-control, but though his voice was very low and restrained, his hands tore at the grass, and he looked away from me as he answered, "You forget—there were no witnesses. I have no money to retain counsel, I could produce no evidence. I have been evading the law for two years. No, no! It would be absolutely hopeless!"

"Well then," said I, in the most matter-of-fact tone I could manage, "tell me just what to do to help you."

His whole body seemed suddenly to

relax; he sat very still for a moment; then taking a deep breath and squaring his shoulders, he looked at me intently.

"You really mean it!" he said in a low, convinced tone. "Well, I want to go to Chicago. I was safe there. I can get work again, I think. I've been hiding here these two days because I had no money. I daren't try to work my way by rail and I haven't the strength to tramp. Can you lend me the fare to Chicago?"

I drew out my bill-folder, knowing beforehand that it contained but four dollars, finances being at a low ebb that time in the month.

"Oh, please don't bother—" began the boy, visibly embarrassed. But I interrupted him, reassuringly, an idea having occurred to me.

"You see, I never carry much money with me off on a tramp like this, but if I could just get you home with me it would be all right, and I could start you off tonight. But—" I looked dubiously at him, and then cast an involuntary glance across the road—"you wouldn't dare to come into the city like that—"

He nodded, and something like a smile crossed his pale face as he rose and moved to a tree a little distance away, producing from its evidently hollow interior several articles with which he swiftly proceeded to make his toilet. He was putting on a collar when I suddenly caught the sound of voices around the upper curve of the road. With a violently beating heart and a watchful eye, I assumed as careless an attitude as possible, propped against my tree, and began to roll a cigarette.

Before the intruders were visible, however, through the gaps in the fence, there was a slight movement beside me. I looked up and sprang to my feet, barely restraining an exclamation, for there sat a man of at least forty, with a heavy red mustache, and sandy hair very smooth and glossy under the soft gray felt hat that was pushed back from a lined and weary brow! Beside him on the ground were a small leather satchel and a silk umbrella.

I glanced incredulously from this apparition to the hollow tree. Yes, the "nice boy," with his tell-tale likeness to the pictured murderer, had vanished!

"Sit down," said my companion in a low tone, and I did so, weakly, just as a group of boys came into sight. "We can go as soon as they've moved on," continued my new friend. "Light your cigarette, and give me one, will you? We could go now, but my legs aren't very steady, and from your looks, I should say yours aren't."

Except that his hands trembled somewhat as he held the match to his cigarette, he was a marvel of composure. The boys, evidently returning from a baseball game, halted in the road before the alluring poster. Their comments floated up to us in the still evening air.

"Gee, fellers, ain't he the sly-lookin' guy, though?"

"Betcher I'd git them $5000 if I ever laid eyes on 'im! Awful quick, too!"

"Wotcher s'pose he done, anyhow?"

Just then one of them caught sight of us, and nudged another. I had a moment of sickening terror, but managed to keep still and continue smoking. I was afraid to look at the man beside me, but he did not move, except to take his cigarette from his lips and exhale the smoke. In another minute the chattering group had drifted out of sight, and the fugitive rose to his feet.

"You see it's all right," he said reassuringly, and not without a hint of boyish pride in the completeness of his disguise. "You've been sick lately, haven't you? Better take a tablet like the one you gave me, and I'll help you down the hill. By the way, my name, at present, is Burton James."

The two-mile walk to the cars was rather trying for both of us, even in the lessening heat. We trudged along, silent for the most part. Once he referred to the afternoon's encounter, as if he owed me an explanation.

"I don't know how I happened to go to sleep so near the fence. I had crawled down to look at that infernal poster, and guess I toppled over in the grass. I must have been light-headed when I woke, or I wouldn't have made so much noise getting up. I was desperate when I saw you, but when I realized that you weren't keen about—about that five thousand—I couldn't let you get away."

By the time we reached my rooms, the strangeness of the situation had quite worn off. It seemed the most natural thing possible to have "Burton James" fry bacon and eggs on the oil-stove while I made the coffee, and when the cheerful little meal was over, I felt in every way refreshed and ready to carry out the plan I had formed to get some money.

"You don't mind staying alone, while I go on an errand, do you?" I asked, as we pushed back our chairs.

"No indeed," he answered, looking up at me frankly. His trust in me was so absolute that I felt ashamed of having thought for a moment that he might suspect me.

"I have to take the keys," I warned him, "otherwise I should have to ring up the janitor to let me in."

"Go ahead," he said cheerfully, beginning to gather up the dishes with a practiced hand. So I went out, wondering, as I softly turned the key, whether he was really as calm as he appeared to be.

It was nearly eight o'clock when I left the house. It was nine when I returned. Before I unlocked the door of my apartment, I listened. During my brief absence, the adventure had begun to seem unreal, preposterous; I was almost prepared to find my guest mysteriously flown; but when I entered the tiny hall, a sound of splashing in the bathroom that opened from it, reassured me as to his presence; and when I turned up the gas he had carefully lowered in the little living room, the incongruity of it all was too much for me! I sat down in the Morris chair and gave way to a mirth that was, after all, rather grim. I tried to picture myself in his place, a fugitive, with a $5000 prize offered for my apprehension, washing dishes, —neatly "redding up" a kitchenette,—taking a bath,— before continuing my flight in disguise. Surely crime never sat more lightly on the criminal!

At this point in my cogitations, the boy reappeared, fresh and rosy, wig and mustache in one hand.

"My friend, I simply couldn't resist that tub," he said serenely. "Thank you. Now I feel ready for anything." And taking a small mirror from his satchel, he swiftly arranged the disguising hair and began to pencil the lines that added twenty years to his age.

"Amateur theatricals?" I questioned, wishing I might ask more about the things this remarkable youngster had done and intended doing.

"Yes," said he briefly, as if not wishing to pursue the subject. As he put the finishing touches to his make-up, and closed his bag, I drew from my pocket a railway schedule and laid it on the table with two ten-dollar bills and a five.

"The night express to Chicago leaves at 10.08," I said. "I wish I could give you more to start off with, but this will leave a little margin, anyhow. If you ever get into trouble, let me know. Here's my card."

"Burton James" took the card and studied it for a moment; but it was the "nice boy" that Burton James concealed who winked and swallowed as he took my hand in a powerful grip.

"I can't thank you," he said, rather

thickly. "You are an A No. 1 brick, that's all, and you'll hear from me some day. I won't take the card, except *here,*" and he tapped his forehead. "I never carry a scrap of writing, not even an initial, but I assure you that I sha'n't forget the man that helped, nor the place that sheltered."

As he put the bills in his waistcoat pocket, he made the same little shame-faced grimace with which he had acknowledged hunger, out there by the roadside.

"It's a loan, remember," he said. "Good-bye. Pray for me once in a while, will you?" And with another handclasp as I opened the door, Burton James and the boy walked downstairs and out of my ken.

But not out of my mind. It wasn't easy to get down to work again; but a financially embarrassed medical student cannot afford to waste time on romantic ruminations. Besides, I was anxious to release my watch from the clutches of the "uncle" who had so grudgingly given me twenty-five dollars for its ancestral beauty.

It was two weeks before I took another half-holiday, and then only because of the repeated growlings of my medical tyrant and best friend.

"Want to do it all over again, eh?" he grumbled, seizing me on the way to the lecture room. "Isn't once enough to kill yourself? I've no time to spend on you, you cheerful young idiot! Get out into the air!"

So the next Saturday afternoon I found myself strolling on a country road several miles from town. I was thinking a good deal about My Adventure, as I capitalized it mentally; and so it hardly surprised me to be confronted by a large red and yellow poster, whence the face of "the boy" peered furtively. But what *did* surprise me, and cause me to sit down limply on the nearest projection, was what followed the words, "For further particulars."

It was this:

See Jim Eastman
Hallowell Theater——N——New Jersey
July 1st, 19—

I sat there a long time and thought and puzzled, and the longer I thought and puzzled, the madder I grew! But by the time I reached my rooms I had exhausted the possibilities of exasperation and was ready to sink back in the Morris chair and laugh again, unrestrainably at the incongruities of the "nice boy."

A month later I received a letter from Chicago. I preserve it carefully, as the only memento of My Great Adventure.

"Mr. Ellis Hicks,

Dear Sir:—

You must have seen the whole poster by this time, and I know you think me all kinds of a fraud. I *was* one kind! But honest, I *was* hungry and penniless, and if I had told you that poster picture was only an infernal coincidence, you wouldn't have believed me for a minute,—now, would you? Anyway, it gave me my great chance to prove that I *could* act! I'd had a rotten row trying to convince my people, and after that the managers,—but thanks to you, I convinced *myself,* and then things began to come my way, so much so that I enclose your twenty-five dollars, and a lot of gratitude I'd like to express and can't.

Sincerely yours,
Burton James.

P.S. It was true about the murder—and my sister. Nobody would believe me when I said he went crazy, so I ran away. There was no end of a row about the $5000 he was worth, but I mean to pay it back some day. He was my uncle's dog.

Yours,
B. J."

The Solitary Ark

BY E. O. WEEKS

Two prowlers of the night, bent on mischief, attack a house boat. What they encountered on their uninvited visit caused them to establish new records for the one hundred yard dash and Marathon.

REASONS not good, but sufficient, had induced the two men to depart from New York in haste. They stood on the lip of the dike, looking down at the dark water of the outflowing tide. Yet even now, when they were miles away from the police of the great city, and standing, as one may say, in the very center of the vast marsh-fields stretching north from Newark Bay, they did not feel secure in staying their flight.

The short, thickset man, with but one eye, was known as the 'Blinker'; and his comrade, long, and tough and wiry, was familiarly spoken of as the 'Crab'—a designation acquired through much facility in walking backward out of difficult situations.

A traveler on a lonely road at night, having the choice of meeting either the 'Crab' or the 'Blinker' would not have been warranted in lifting a straw to determine his preference.

In the chill of the November evening the two thieves stood on the dike, and shivered and cursed. Looking back in the way they had come, the failing light disclosed only a wide expanse of reeds and rushes; and gazing forward, the same monotony met the sight. Above all rolled the low clouds of a gathering storm. With the passing of another hour, the great salt meadows would be lying under the pall of a black night.

"Well, what do yer say?" said the 'Blinker.' "You've got two eyes, an' ought to be able to see better'n I can;—will we go on, or go back?"

"What I says is to go on," replied the 'Crab.' "It's as much legs as eyes; an' if I've got two eyes, you've got two legs, so we're even!" And speaking so, the long man turned north on the embankment, and the short man followed him.

Now and then they stopped to listen. The lapping tide sounded sometimes like the dripping of a furtive oar, and sometimes like the rush of pursuing footsteps.

"What's that!" cried out the 'Crab,' halting suddenly and grasping his companion's arm.

The 'Blinker' stood still, while he bent his bullet head forward and peered into the gloom with his single eye. At first he heard nothing, but he saw a ruddy light shining through the frost-bitten leaves of a clump of willows. After a moment, the sound of a hammer falling on an anvil met his ear.

The unexpected thing excites superstition. The light of the forge and the smith's tinkling blows seemed strangely out of place in the solitude of the marsh, and therefore supernatural. The long man and the short man regarded each other in doubt.

"You was the one that wanted to go on," said the 'Blinker'; "now go ahead!"

"I'm as ready as you," retorted the 'Crab'; "why don't you come?"

"I'm coming," said the 'Blinker'; "why don't you go?"

"To Hell, then!" said the 'Crab,' turning reluctantly, but not moving forward.

"To Hell, yourself!" said the 'Blinker'; as if prepared to brush him by and take the lead.

Both stirred their feet like men catching the step of a dance; neither one advanced a pace.

In the increasing gloom and silence of the great salt meadows, a vast *something,* voiceless and formless, seemed to gather about the two thugs, oppressing them with its might; and without thought and without intention, but willing to dare what was tangible, they stepped forward to escape from this invisible weight.

Following the bend of the embankment around the clump of willows, they came upon a singular habitation—a floating ark, or houseboat. It was a neat cabin built on the deck of a shapely hulk, trimly railed and mostly painted white, and made snug and fine by good workmanship. It was securely moored to the trees, yet tugged at the ropes, as it rocked with the movement of the outgoing tide. Close under the eaves were louvers for ventilation, and from between the inclined slats came the glow of deflected light. The windows were closed with solid shutters, and the entrance door was shut;—in fact, so closely shut were these, that no direct ray came through chink or cranny.

From the cabin's roof protruded an ample and safe chimney—a stiff pipe of boiler iron—and out from this, as the men stood looking, poured forth smoke and sparks, preceded by the heaving of bellows and followed by the noise of a small hammer beating on an anvil.

Through the misty gloaming of the marsh-fields the 'Crab' and the 'Blinker' stared at each other with questioning eyes. In their desperate situation the snug vessel looked to them not less tempting than a merchantman to a pirate crew. Here, perhaps, might be food and lodging for the night, and a coffer to pillage. How then could they reach the deck of the cosey houseboat, lying eight or nine feet out from the dike? With wordless, concerted action, they turned among the willows to see if they could find an overhanging tree.

Now the man in the ark belonged to the ancient and honorable order of unimaginative men. They are the ones who do the work that the ninety-and-nine shun. To him the sightless caverns of poor Yorick's skull were as the garret of an empty house. He did not mentally reincarnate the vanished flesh or the once living presence. Human bones were to him as other bones; indeed, they formed a part of his stock in trade. Defined in the fewest words, he was a skillful and scientific articulator. For the winter he had his loft in the great city. For the remainder of the year he anchored his floating workshop when and where he pleased. In either place, men of science visited him cheerfully; but the casual person usually came but once and departed for good. Thus did this man follow his bent and his business. Slim and active, with nerves and muscles tough like hickory fiber, it may truthfully be said of him that he feared neither the living nor the dead.

So the 'Crab' and the 'Blinker' sought for an overhanging tree and did not find it; but in its stead they discovered a tall young willow which could be bent to their purpose. Hand over hand the long man crossed first, and hand over hand the short man followed in his wake. At first, the outraged willow did not attempt to regain its upright position. It waited until the men had made the circuit of the deck, ineffectually seeking for a peep-hole to the mystery of the

cabin, and then rose with a complaining sigh beyond their reach.

A thief is like a rat: he must see a way in and also a way out. The 'Crab' and the 'Blinker' stepped to the mooring-ropes, hoping by that means to pull the ark nearer to the dike; but the tide was rushing out with power, and the adroitly anchored vessel would not budge. In surly desperation they turned about to challenge the inhabitant.

In the cabin, by the light of his hooded forge, the articulator was tempering a delicate spring. His forge was also his stove, and thereby he not only fashioned his tools and attachments, but over the glowing fire of coke, boiled his kettle for tea or grilled for himself a steak. In the center of the cabin stood his table neatly spread for supper. It was a homelike place—at least so it seemed to him, for he did not mind the skeletons set up around its borders.

There, had anyone looked in, might have been seen the bony structure of a great serpent, coiled to strike; of a wild swan, with its twenty-eight remarkable vertebrae between the skull and the sacrum; of a crocodile, with a section of the brain-case lined to show a cavity for the brain, so small that it would hardly admit the thumb of a child; of a man, exactly erect and balanced, the majestic line of the center of gravity indicated by a silver wire;—these, and a dozen others might have been seen, all white, clean, polished, and accurately poised.

On the door of the cabin sounded an ominous knock; insolent, aggressive.

The articulator looked up quickly. His boat was out from the shore; he had heard nothing, and even a small skiff must make some noise in coming about: hence that knock, neither civil nor timid, indicated a covert purpose boldly unmasked. Already the knob was turning, and the door was not locked!

He set his foot on the pedal of his bellows and said—"Come in!"

Yet it should be here said that the Man of the Ark did not choose to live entirely alone. He kept for company two black cats. To one of these, not bigger than ordinary, he gave the name of Nox; to the other, the name of Astarte; and this Astarte, strange as it may seem, was as large as a mastiff. A scientific association had sent the articulator on a special mission to southern Asia, and there, in a native family, he found a pair of leopards in domestication, and, in a litter of cubs, one that was perfectly black in the shade, but which exhibited the pattern of the others in the sunlight, and he purchased this sport as a pet and companion. And the black leopard grew to be strong and beautiful, and affectionate, and jealous, and exceedingly distrustful of every man except her master. She was blessed with the traits of the powerful goddess of Syria after whom she was named. Also, in her proper self, she was nimble and vigilant, and nothing escaped her attention; yet her remarkable circumspection was exercised strictly in accordance with the manners of her tribe.

The dog comes forth boldly and announces his suspicions: the cat conceals itself at once, and watches its prey or enemy from some secret point of vantage. When Astarte had doubts she disguised herself as a shadow, and closed the lids of her jewel-like eyes to the merest slits; but the measure of her distrust was revealed in the projection of her ebony claws, curved like a hawk's beak and fully as large. And to Asarte, as becoming to her changeable beauty, the Master gave a necklace of flashing paste pendants; and to Nox, in equally appropriate keeping, he gave two ear-drops which resembled bright, prismatic stars.

The slumbering coke, aroused by the

blast, threw a ruddy glare upon the faces of the 'Crab' and the 'Blinker' as they opened the door.

At a glance, the articulator placed them in the class of animals to which they belonged. But the manner of man he might be they could not know; for he stood in the shadow cast by the hood of the forge.

Yet of the other things in the red light the intruders saw enough to fix their tripartite vision!—the bony structures of the swan, the man, the serpent, and the crocodile, these they beheld, and others; and on a broad bench in the furnace-glow a small black cat, her ear-tips flashing sparks of rhinestone fire! For a minute their gaze shifted from the black cat to the silent man, then to the skeletons, and then back to the cat again. But in that moment what a frightful change had come! The little cat had grown to a monstrous shape!

About her neck was a string of fiery pendants, and in her eyes the green flame of hate. With ebony talons protruding from dark velvet paws she scratched the bench-top and spat, snarled, and hissed!

"To Hell, then!" had said the 'Crab,' and, "To Hell, yourself!" had said the 'Blinker.'

Not for a single instant did they stop to stare at the motionless mute by the roaring forge, at the dreadful cat and the white and glistering skeletons—all objects to them of that nether wrold of late so loudly proclaimed!—but with speed they leaped to the side of the boat and slid off into the cold out-flowing tide!

In the doorway so quickly vacated stood the articulator, and upon his features was the smile of the scientific humorist.

"Of a surety," quoth he, "the unenlightened wretches mistook this stream for the Styx in Hades, and my ark for the Boat of Charon, who was the Son of Darkness and Nephew of Night!"

Oh, certainly, Science has her laugh! —although a trifle grim!

Olahu—God of Love

BY EDWARD BOLTWOOD

How a lover, fearful of losing the hand and heart of his lady love, plays on the superstition of a labor gang of savages to rout his rival.

OOTED by amazement, young Josh Gardner stood on Long Wharf and glared blankly at the extraordinary passengers, who had landed from the trading schooner.

"Zulus!" he gasped. "Or Hottentots! Well, by mighty! Is them the hands I've got to boss?"

Although he had been hired for a supervisor that summer by the cranberry company, Josh was as much astonished as anybody in Tacummet to see the strange people, whom the company planned to set to work in the bogs of the New England island. In a dignified procession, they advanced slowly up the wharf. Their stature was gigantic, their features were African, their complexion of a lightish copper, and their costumes not to be depicted, but, in general, tropical and fragmentary.

Mr. Locke, the agent of the cranberry company, bustled about.

"Hey, Gardner!" cried he. "This is your gang! You know where they're going to live—the old candle house on Duck Lane. Steer 'em there, will you? This geezer in front speaks English some. That so, Uncle Tom? This is your boss—your big chief."

"How do?" gravely intoned a tall patriarch, extending an immense hand to Josh and bowing as if to royalty. "I much friend to you."

Painfully embarrassed, Josh led the outlandish line up the cobbled main street of the ancient whaling town. Uncle Tom declined to release his hand as they strode along. Upon this fact, and upon the cortege as a whole, grinning street loungers bestowed audible derision.

"Make fast to it, Josh!"

"Say, Josh, introduce your friend!"

"Looks more like blackberryin' than cranberryin', seems so, a'most."

At the post-office corner, Cap'n Levi Snow pounded with his cane on the pavement.

"Cat's foot!" he snorted, with deep disgust. "What's Josh Gardner comin' to? Over on the cape, they work Verde Islanders in their bogs, but Locke, he don't even know where these blame cannibals do hail from! Somewheres off Teneriffe, he reckons."

"Takin' the bread out of our mouths," added Mr. Ben Dunham, who toiled one day each week at his vocation of carpet cleaning. "What's this contract labor law you read about?"

In the meantime, Josh and his picturesque parade had passed the post office and reached the Tacummet Ice Cream Parlors. Rosie Nickerson, a very pretty girl, garbed daintily as a waitress, leaned in the doorway beside a hatchet-faced young man. His attire indicated that he was a frequenter of large cities. The globular toes of his patent-leather shoes were like split baseballs, the stripes of his mathematically pressed suit confused the eye, a crimson carnation bedecked his lapel. His cravat and his stockings were of a vivid and passionate shade of purple.

When Josh Gardner came abreast of him this young man lifted his elastic

cane to the brim of his green hat and saluted elaborately.

"I've been in almost every theatrical line, Rosie," he said, "except the minstrel business, but I know a swell black-face troop when I see one. Greetings, Mr. Dockstader!"

"Oh, Clive De Percy!" giggled the girl. "Aren't you killing!"

Gardner, after one brief and agonized glance into the doorway, marched on stolidly. But his cheeks blazed, and he gritted his teeth.

"That circus fellow from Boston hasn't been here more'n a fortnight," he murmured, "and he's calling her 'Rosie'! He's got the poor little girl hypnotized. Here, you old grampus, cast off my hand, can't you?"

The dusky patriarch regarded him as with deep affection.

"How do?" said Uncle Tom tenderly. "I much friend to you."

The stone warehouse in the seclusion of Duck Lane had been equipped with bunks and a cook stove, and when Josh had concealed his gentle followers in these jail-like quarters he felt somewhat relieved. The childish submissiveness of the emigrants amused him. Standing in the bunk room, beside one of the narrow, barred windows, he listened to their soft-spoken and unintelligible jargon.

Suddenly, however, a voice in the lane made him grit his teeth again. The voice was Mr. Clive De Percy's, and Mr. Clive De Percy was singing.

"Oh! Oh! Oh-oh-oh!" caroled the voice blithely. "Oh, you beautiful doll!"

Josh peeked out. It was obvious that his detested rival was returning to the summer hotel, on the cliff beyond Duck Lane, where he was a guest. It was obvious, too, that Mr. De Percy was exultant. He snapped his cane aloft, his feet performed a sort of dance step, his song was clearly one of triumph.

Frowning, Josh addressed Uncle Tom, close at his elbow.

"I'll be back here quick," he growled. "Understand?"

He did not notice that his frown seemed to fill the old man's eyes with tears of sympathetic distress. Gardner had other things to think about, as he hastened to the ice cream parlors on Main Street. Miss Nickerson still loitered idly in the doorway, and as Josh approached, she was tucking a crimson carnation in her black hair.

"Well, Rosie!" said he. "It's all right about goin' with me to the Captains' Day doin's tomorrow afternoon, isn't it, same as you've always done, ever since we were kids? I want you to go with me to the fancy-dress business, and the supper, and the dancin' afterwards. How about it?"

Rosie patted the flower against her pretty curls.

"Tomorrow's Friday, isn't it, Joshua? I guess I'll be engaged."

"Engaged?" faltered Gardner, awe-stricken.

"Yes," she nodded coldly. "You see, I'll be taking the early Saturday boat to Boston."

"For gracious sakes, Rosie,—not with —not with—"

"I've got a cousin living in Boston," interrupted Miss Nickerson, "and I plan to make her a visit."

She carefully inspected her finger nails, humming the air of the same song which Joshua had already heard in Duck Lane.

"I'll tell you," said he, " the Captains' Day party is goin' to be better than ever this year. The academy grounds are fixed up fine for it. There's dandy costumes to rent down to Barret's store. I've picked out a Spanish suit, same as Ben Dunham had last time when he won the prize. Can't you come along with me, Rosie? If you're going off-island

the next morning, maybe I won't see you again for—for quite a spell."

"But I've promised to go to Captains' Day with somebody else," murmured the girl.

"Then I know who it is!" Josh exclaimed bitterly. "A fellow you never laid eyes on till two weeks ago! Him and his beautiful dolls!"

With superb indignation, Rosie straightened her graceful shoulders.

"You've got no right to talk about him that mean way, Joshua Gardner! He's an actor, that's what he is, he isn't a cranberry picker! He gets forty or fifty dollars a week for acting on the stage in opera houses. And you're not even acquainted with him, either, nor he with you! He asked who you were, just now, and I was so ashamed I dasen't tell him that I knew you."

"Ashamed, Rosie?"

"Yes, ashamed to see you associating with such low-down folks as you were on the street with today!"

"It isn't you that's speakin', now," said Joshua. "It's some kind of a ha'nt that fellow's put over you—that play-actor."

"What are you sneering at play-actors for?" she rejoined. "Won't you be trying the same as play-acting yourself at the masquerade tomorrow? Well, you wait till you see Clive there, that's all! He hasn't let on to me how he's going to dress up, but he'll win the prize as sure as anything. And then you'll feel cheap enough, Mr. Gardner—cheap enough to associate with the heathen trash you seem to like so much!"

"They're decent, peaceable people, Rosie. And the company's given me a good, steady, year-'round job. I was thinkin' that the salary would do to—to start house-keepin' on, what with that little farm o' mine, and all."

He ventured a wistful glance, but Miss Nickerson, having found a grievance, was femininely determined to make the most of it.

"Better start house-keeping alongside of your black savages down the lane," said Rosie, with a tilt of her enticing chin. "Do you think I could ever have anything to do with a man who has such folks chasing around after him and turning him into a fool? I hate that, worse'n anything. Just look! Look yonder, across the street!"

Josh obeyed. In the shadow of a tree across the street, lurked Uncle Tom. His attitude was that of a faithful lover, waiting for his mistress. When he caught Gardner's horrified stare, he smiled blissfully.

With the jeer of Rosie's laughter stinging his ears, Josh dashed over and clenched his fist.

"Go home, you old id'jut!" he cried.

"How do?" said Uncle Tom, offering his hand. "I much friend to you!"

"Yes, like Mike you are!" groaned Josh.

Delighted spectators began to appear, and Josh fled. Behind him, the huge, bare feet of Uncle Tom flopped patiently on the bricks.

Increasing his pace, the appalled Mr. Gardner darted into the obscurity of the nearest side-street, which led beyond the Pacific Bank and the Historical Society's museum; and at the next corner, he missed the soft thud of his pursuer and looked cautiously to the rear. The strangest of sights greeted him.

In a front window of the museum had been placed, as a lure to summer visitors, a grotesque idol, which some whaling master of many years ago had brought to Tacummet from a tropical and distant sea. Fantastically colored, and of the shape and dimensions of a man, the idol had apparently petrified Uncle Tom. The venerable negro stood motionless on the sidewalk, as if he had been paralyzed by lightning.

"Olahu! Olahu!" crooned Uncle Tom.

"What's that?" inquired Josh.

"Olahu!" repeated the patriarch reverently; and he bent his knees.

"Hey, stand up, can't you?" Josh grunted. "Somebody'll spot you makin' a spectacle of yourself, and of me, too."

The janitor, inside the museum, relieved him abruptly by lowering the window curtain against the sun. The swift disappearance of the idol evidently impressed Uncle Tom as having been accomplished by appropriate magic. He blinked at the sky, at the ground, and finally at Mr. Gardner.

"Olahu gone back," he announced.

"Sure," assented Josh.

"You much my big chief," observed Uncle Tom. "Olahu more much our plenty-god. See Olahu, never can leave him."

"Is that so?" said Josh pleasantly. "Then I wish you were Rosie Nickerson, Uncle Tom, and I was Ola-what's-its-name. I wish—I wish—"

But a sudden thought seemed to strike Mr. Gardner. He slapped his leg and gazed wildly at the curtained window.

"Great Mackerel!" he chuckled. "Wouldn't that be goin' some!"

The next morning, Clive De Percy, of the Musical De Percies, was strolling at elegant leisure on Long Wharf, when he was accosted respectfully by a tall, well-made, well-tanned young fellow, with a very frank and honest countenance.

" 'Scuse me, Mr. Percy."

"De Percy," requested the vaudeville artist.

"Mr. De Percy, I mean," said Josh humbly. "Can I speak to you for just a minute?"

"Make it," consented Clive, looking at the watch on his puny wrist.

"I heard tell, Mr. De Percy, how you was a great actor, and I just kind o' thought I'd ask your advice. You see, it's Captains' Day celebration this afternoon, with masquerade doin's for a prize, and so on. They have it every year. I don't suppose you know about it."

The song-and-dance man looked sharply at Josh, but Gardner's innocent blue eyes never wavered.

"Why, of course I know about it," said De Percy crossly. "Get a gait on, will you? This is my busy day. I'm going to take the early boat tomorrow, for Boston."

The blue eyes darkened a trifle.

"Well, it's about this masquerade prize, Mr. De Percy. I've got a bang-up idea for a fancy rig, that's bound to win it—a rig that's never been tried Captains' Day, no time."

"That so?" Clive responded, with sudden alertness.

"Yes, sir. You see, it's almighty hard to get a new idea, and this is one that'll hit Tacummet hard, 'cause the whole island will rekunize the rig. But not bein' a great actor, I don't know's how I can fetch. By gravy, I tell you it's a rig that'll get talked about in the papers!"

Mr. De Percy spread a perfumed silk handkerchief over the top of a snubbing post, and sat down.

"Say on, little one," he commanded. "Your story interests me. I am looking for just such an idea myself. That prize means a nice press notice to me. Say on."

Mr. Gardner said on, accordingly. Fifteen minutes later, the two had left the wharf and were examining the figure of the idol in the museum. Before an hour had elapsed, they were in Clive De Percy's room at the hotel, and Mr. De Percy, having spread out on the bed a newly purchased bundle of brilliant calico and millinery plumage, was inspecting the colored face-paints in his professional make-up box.

"I can do it!" he said, in triumph. "I'll put everybody else on the blink!"

"Certain thing!" said Josh.

"Where's the show grounds, old pal? Shall I go through the streets in this wardrobe?"

"Oh, yes!" Mr. Gardner assured him. "All the masqueraders do. You rig up, and paint up, and don't say a word to nobody, and stop for me at that stone house in Duck Lane, and we'll go along together. Four o'clock, sharp. I expect," he added resignedly, "that I'll have to dress up in that Spanish suit, after all."

It was seven minutes past four that afternoon when Josh Gardner emerged, with some precipitation, from the candle house, and turned the key behind him in the rusty lock of the ancient door.

He looked around. Duck Lane was deserted. Main Street was deserted. Tacummet was attending its annual festival on the academy hill, near by, where the tooting of the town band proclaimed the celebration to be in progress.

But the music of the band was not the only sound which gratified the ears of Mr. Gardner in Duck Lane. A queer jumble of many voices came through the small windows of the warehouse. Words were difficult to distinguish; one strange expression, however, seemed to be regularly insistent.

"Olahu! Olahu!" droned a continuous bass chorus, while above it arose a series of shrill and highly surprised exclamations.

"Lemme out, will you? What the—leggo, you old baboon, leggo! If you kiss my foot again, I'll—Hey! Police!"

Josh walked away thoughtfully.

At the gate of the academy grounds, he encountered Rosie Nickerson. She was leaning against a post, as if expecting somebody. Beyond the gate was a scene of festivity—the dancing pavilion, the decorated booths, the fancifully dressed crowd. But Miss Nickerson was pensive—even gloomy. Her troubled eyes searched the street to the waterfront, where, at Long Wharf, the evening boat for Boston was making steam.

" Might as well set down with me on this bench, Rosie, while you're waiting," suggested Mr. Gardner gently.

The girl hesitated.

"It isn't much to ask, and none of my colored folks are followin' me around, to shame you," Josh said.

Rosie sighed and sat down.

"He's making a—a fool out of me, keeping me waiting this way," she faltered.

"Yes?" said Gardner. "Well, I sort o' judge he's used to foolin' people, Rosie. You see, that's his business. But nobody can't stand bein' made a fool of, not very long. And maybe he can't stand it, least of any."

"What do you mean?" demanded Miss Nickerson.

Before Josh could explain, the steamboat whistle sounded a warning blast. The daily departures of the boat were events of importance in Tacummet. From force of habit, a large part of the assemblage in the academy grounds drifted toward the gate to watch the steamer pull out.

"I mean," temporized Rosie's lover softly, " that I wish you could put off your visit to Boston till after tomorrow."

"Well, I'm precious likely to," she said, with a flash of tearful anger. "I'm precious likely to, unless Clive—Oh, see! There he is, at the corner of Duck Lane! He's coming after all! But what's the matter with him?"

"Shucks!" reflected Josh inaudibly. "I mistrusted that candle-house door wouldn't hold!"

"He's turning the wrong way!" cried Miss Nickerson. "And oh, Josh, see who's with him!"

The throng of observers at the gate breezed into a gale of merriment.

They had reason. Mr. Clive De Percy, below them on Main Street, presented an astounding figure of ridicule. His

scanty costume of gaudy calico and his feathered headdress were in pronounced disarray, as if he had attempted to remove them altogether. The brown and crimson paint on his face had been smeared into an indiscriminate blotch.

Around him, at a respectful distance, were gathered Uncle Tom and the cranberry pickers. They waved their arms in the air and chanted sonorously.

"Olahu! Olahu!"

" 'Pears like they're terrible fond o' that Willieboy," cackled Levi Snow.

Josh looked at Miss Nickerson. She smiled in response. The smile rightfully caused Mr. Gardner to swell his breast with the deep, satisfied breath of a victor.

The steamer at the wharf tooted a farewell shriek, and the whistle seemed suddenly to galvanize Clive De Percy. He hunched his shoulders as he ran toward the boat. In his wake solemnly trotted the dusky idolaters.

"Ain't seen no such a send-off since the governor was on the island!" roared Ben Dunham. "B'jiminy, he just fetched!"

In fact, a final burst of speed had landed Mr. De Percy on the moving gangplank. Violent deck hands pulled him furiously aboard the *Tacummet,* and Rosie Nickerson saw him no more.

At the head of the wharf, Josh Gardner met Uncle Tom.

"How do?" said the old man. "I much friend to you."

"You bet!" assented Josh fervently.

Luke McLuke Says

BY J. SYME HASTINGS

After reading the epitaphs on the tombstones in a graveyard a man always wonders where they put the wicked people when they die.

The Cost of Living wasn't so high in the days when a woman steamed her face over a wash tub instead of spending her afternoons in a Turkish bath.

About six months after the wedding a bride often wishes that she had added fewer fol-de-rols and more canned goods to her trousseau.

Maybe a girl wouldn't be so scared of a mouse if she would stop to remember that it wears a moustache.

The reason a girl is a girl is because she will go upstairs to dress, keep a fellow waiting for two hours, and then come down wearing the same clothes she had on all day.

The world is growing better. But too much good life insurance money is being invested in no-account second husbands.

About the time you get used to a bride and a cheap shirt they both begin to fade.

Don't cuss your enemies. They cost you less than your friends.

The pretty men buy all the sundaes for the girls, but the homely men buy all the marriage licenses.

You don't see any more "Standing Room Only" signs in the theatres, but you see plenty of them on the skirts the girls are wearing these days.

The old-fashioned woman who squeezed "Abide With Me" out of the parlor organ now has a daughter who kicks "In My Harem" out of the player piano.

The "He Sez" club meets at the soda fountain in the candy store, and the "She Sez" club meets in the pool room on the corner.

A poor poker player never has any trouble getting rid of the blues.

Virtue is its own reward. And the reward is seldom big enough to pay for Birds of Paradise and Willow plumes.

Aside from the bonds of matrimony the women are wearing everything tighter this year.

All women love animals. That is the reason why poodles and husbands are so popular.

When a man buys a suit of clothes he doesn't know the difference between wool and cotton. But if he orders rye and they give him bourbon he wants to fight.

When she suddenly realizes that he snores, you can bet that the honeymoon has ended.

The reason a girl gets off a street car the wrong way is because she has to sit on the floor to put on her stockings.

A sea lion isn't the sloppiest thing in the world. It is a girl who is trying to cry and chew gum at the same time.

Before marriage he can hold a 150-pound girl on his knee for four hours and not get tired. After marriage it exhausts him to hold a 10-pound baby on his knee for four minutes.

Lots of men who wouldn't wear a second-hand suit of clothes act real proud because they marry grass widows.

Dimples and bartenders are responsible for most of the smiles.

A Barter in Babies

BY BELLE KANARIS MANIATES

By a set of unusual circumstances, a childless couple have the care of five small boys thrust upon them. A forgotten will turns the affection into a blessing.

OME people have children born unto them, some acquire children and others have children thrust upon them. Silvia and I were of the last named class. We have no offspring of our own, but yesterday, today, and forever we have those of our neighbor.

Silvia's upcoming had been supervised by a grimalkin governess, who drew around the form of her young charge the awful circle of exclusiveness, intercourse with child-kind being strictly prohibited. Once she had essayed to break parole and had made an adroit escape from surveillance. She sped to the top of the boundary wall that separated the stable precincts from an alluring alley which was the playground of the plebeian progeny of the lowly-lived. To the circle of dirty but interesting ragamuffins she became a tangent—an outlawed, isolated child deprived of her birthright. One of the group, with the ready hospitality of the unchartered but generous-hearted members of the silt of the stream of humanity, proffered a chip of mud designed to become a fruitcake stuffed with pebbles in lieu of raisins and frosted with moistened ashes. Before the enticing pastime of transformation was begun, Silvia however, was swiftly snatched from the scene and borne over the ramparts, no more to roam. In spite of the handicaps of so barren a childhood she achieved young womanhood unspoiled and in possession of her democratic tendencies.

Her parents died and left her with that most unprofitable of legacies—an encumbered estate. Then I dared to woo and win her.

We set up housekeeping in a small thriving city. Silvia had all the requisites of mind, manner, and domestic science adequate to a hearth and homemaker. There was only one adjunct missing to our Acadia. While at a word or look, children flocked to me like friendly puppies, to Silvia they were still an unknown quantity.

For my sake she tried most assiduously to cultivate a liking for members of child-world, but into that kingdom there is no open sesame. The sure, keen intuition of a child recognizes on sight a kindred spirit, and my wife's forced advances met with but indifferent response.

"I fear," said Silvia wistfully, as she stood at the window one day gazing pensively at the vacant house next to ours, "that we will never receive any part of Uncle Issacher's fortune."

Uncle Issacher was a wealthy but eccentric relative of my wife. He had made us no wedding gift beyond his good wishes, but he had informed us that he would place in the bank to Silvia's credit, at the birth of each of our prospective sons, the sum of five thosand dollars; but we had been married nine years and my hope that her understanding of children might develop in the

natural way had not been realized.

While I was debating whether the lament in Silvia's voice was for the loss of the money or the lack of children, she again spoke—this time in a tone which had lost its languor.

"There is a moving van in front of the house next door. At last we are to have near neighbors."

"Oh, are they unloading furniture?" I inanely asked.

"Not yet. The van seems to be overflowing with children—a whole crowd. Do you suppose the house is to be used as an orphan asylum?"

I thought not. Five children were a crowd in Silvia's sight.

The next day I opened the outer door of the dining room in response to the raps of strenuously applied knuckles.

The smiling face of a satyr with diabolically bright eyes, in the form of a lad of ten years, stepped into the room.

"We are going to have soup and mother wants a soup plate for father to eat his out of," he announced.

Silvia's facial expression clearly indicated her thoughts.

Without comment she handed the boy a soup plate, and he ran away twirling it above his head.

Two days later he again appeared on our threshold.

"We are going to have soup again," he stated. "We want a soup plate for father."

"Where is the one I lent you the other day?" asked Silvia in a tone far below 32 degrees Fahrenheit, while her features assumed a frigidity that should have congealed father's favorite sustenance.

"Oh, we broke that!" was the casually and cheerfully delivered explanation.

Silvia reluctantly bestowed another plate upon the young applicant.

'It would be well," I suggested, "to invest in another dozen or so of soup plates. Our supply will soon give out if our new neighbors continue to indulge in the soup habit and the borrowing habit as well."

"I shall call upon them this afternoon and see what manner of people they are."

When I came home the next evening it was quite evident she had called.

"Well," I inquired, "what do they keep—a soup house?"

"They are literary people. Their name is Polydore, and the head of the house—"

"Mr. or Mrs.?" I interrupted.

"Is a collector," pursued Silvia, ignoring my anxious inquiry.

"So I inferred. Has he a large collection of soup plates?"

"He collects antiquities."

"What sort of people are they?"

"I didn't see them. After I rang, I heard a woman's voice bidding the servant not to go to the door. She said she couldn't be bothered with interruptions. I got my information from Mrs. Pelham, who was also refused admission. I met the boy as I came back. He had been digging bait—"

"Well," I prompted, as she paused.

"He was carrying his bait—horrid, wriggling angleworms—in our soup plate!"

"I trust it is given an antiseptic bath before father's next revelry in consomme. I will go over after dinner and pay my respects to the soup savant."

"They won't let you in."

"Then I shall follow in their lead of setting ceremony aside and admit myself."

A slipshod servant opened the door after my third vigorous ring and seated me in the hall. She read with interest the card I handed her and, pushing aside some mangy looking plush portieres, vanished from my sight.

I hear my name, "Tomlins," vaguely repeated by a woman as she evidently perused my card which the slovenly

servant soon returned to me.

"She seen it," she assured me in answer to my look of surprise.

After waiting some time I arose to leave. My course was deflected by the entrance of a troop of noisy children headed by the soup-plate skirmisher.

"Oh, that you!" he greeted in a chummy way. "Come on in. Mother'll never remember to come out."

He grasped at the curtain strenuously, pulling it from the pole and thus bringing into view a woman with face and form of a rocking horse. She was seated at a book-strewn table, writing at a rate of speed that convinced me she was in the throes of an inspiration, which I forebore to interrupt.

My scruples were not shared by her eldest child. He gave her elbow a jog of reminder, which sent her pencil to the floor.

"Here's the man next door—the one we get our soup plates from."

The woman looked up abstractedly.

"How do you do? I supposed you had gone. I am engaged in writing a paper on modern antiquities."

I apologized for my untimely interruption.

"I am so absorbed in my work," she explained, "that I am oblivious to all else. I have the great gift of concentration to a marked degree."

I do not doubt this statement in the least. As she had resumed her literary occupation, I made a second attempt at exit, but my outgoing way was blocked by a promiscuous pack of pugilistic Polydores who had become involved in an ardent and general onslaught.

I endeavored to untangle the legs and arms of the attackers and the attacked, but soon beat a retreat, having no mind to become a punching bag for Polydores. The writer of modern antiquities, looking up vaguely in search of an antonym, perceived the wholesale joust.

"Did you ever see such acting children?" She asked casually and impersonally.

"Children always misbehave before company," I remarked propitiatingly. "Of course they know better."

"Why, no, they don't," she replied, looking at me in mingled surprise and contempt. "They—"

At this instant the errant antonym appeared to her mental vision and her pencil hastened to make record thereof.

A momentary cessation of hostilities was caused by the entrance of a moth-eaten looking man whom Diogenes, the baby and non-combatant, addressed as "fadder." The newcomer seemed to realize that some sort of compulsory conventionalities should be observed, and he informed me frankly and impressively that we must expect nothing of them socially as their lives were devoted to research and study. The children assured me, however, that they should be over to see us.

"How many children are there?" asked Silvia faintly, when I had related to her the details of my neighborly call.

" 'Not many, but much,' " I replied. "Five, in round numbers, but each is equal to at least three ordinary children."

"Are they all boys?"

"Assuredly. They must have been born with boots on and," recalling the imprints on my shins, "hobnail boots at that. Even the youngest, a two-year old, seems to have been graduated from Home Rule."

Henceforth our life was one long round of the child portion of the prolific family. They were utterly impervious to my wife's aloofness and at last she succumbed to their presence as one of the things inevitable.

"The Polydores are here to stay," she declared.

The children are not as literary as other productions of their profound pa-

rents, but were a band of robust, active youngsters unburdened with brains, excepting perhaps Ptolemy of soup plate fame, who was uncanny in his wisdom. When they first began swarming in upon us at all times, Silvia drew a fine line.

"They shall not eat here," she decreed.

The very next day after this edict went forth, Ptolemy came in while we were seated at the table. There insued a silence which the lad made no effort to break. He stood watching us with the mute wistfulness of a hungry animal. Even Silvia was finally moved to ask reluctantly:

"Haven't you been to dinner, Ptolemy?"

"Yes," he admitted, adding quickly: "I could eat another dinner, though."

And before protest could be made, he had supplied himself with a plate and the accompanying accoutrements. His enjoyment and evident need of the meal weakened Silvia's fortifications. This opening, of course, was but a wedge to let in other Polydores, and we seldom sat down to a meal without the presence of one or more members of the illustrious and famished family.

There were times when Silvia threatened to move to a childless locality. Once her resolve to escape from sight and sound of the children of our neighbor became so firmly fixed that I called upon the head of the House of Polydore to recommend and urge that the young scions be sent to school. To my surprise this suggestion met with no objections. Mrs. Polydore remarked that it would doubtless do them no harm, although she maintained that the best educations were obtained outside of schools.

Of course the task of making pupils out of the protoplasm of pestiferous Polydores devolved upon Silvia, who actively pushed a project that promised her a few hours' respite each day. She arose at an early hour one Monday morning in order to make our Polydore proteges presentable. For two hours she pulled up stockings, tied shoe strings, combed out tangles, adjusted collars, and vigorously scrubbed ten grimy little hands. At last, with an air of achievement, she corralled her round-up and unloaded at the office of the superintendent of schools. Diogenes was admitted to a nursery kindergarten.

Her feeling of freedom was short-lived, for she had scarcely returned home when the four prospective pupils came trooping and whooping into the house.

"What is it?" breathed Silvia from the depths of her despair.

"Got to be vaccinated," explained Ptolemy with an appreciative grin as he noted her discomfiture The vaccination accomplished through Silvia's offices, the Polydores were reluctantly accepted by the school authorities. To keep them enrolled, taxed my wife's ingenuity in the way of framing excuses for the repeated cases of absence, tardiness, and suspension.

The summer vacation time arrived, bringing joy to the hearts of the Polydores and their teachers, but deep gloom to the hearthside of the Tomlins.

"It might be worse," I comforted. Alas! all too soon was my supposition substantiated. That night, after we had gone to bed, I heard a cab drive up to the house next door.

"The Polydores must have unexpected guests," I remarked.

"I trust they brought no children with them," murmured Silvia drowsily.

The next morning while we were at breakfast the young Polydores en masse bore down upon us.

"Father and mother have gone away," announced Ptolemy, the spokesman.

This intelligence was then of no particular interest to us. His next state-

ment, however, was startling in dramatic effect.

"We've come to stay with you while they're away."

I laughed jocosely.

Silvia paid no attention to my forced hilarity, but asked feebly:

"Why—what do you mean?"

"They have gone away somewhere," enlightened Ptolemy, "to find out something about some kind of aborigines."

"Which reminds me," I remarked reminiscently, "of the man who traveled far and vainly in search of a certain plant which, on his return, he found growing at his own doorstep."

Silvia was not seemingly appreciative of my mild attempt at humor.

"I don't see," she said to Ptolemy, "why their absence should make any difference in your remaining at home. Emma can cook your meals and put Diogenes to bed as usual."

"Emma's gone," piped Thaggy, short for Pythagoras. "She left yesterday afternoon."

"Father forgot to get another girl in her place," continued Ptolemy, "and he forgot to tell mother he had forgotten until just before they went. She said we could come over here and stay."

"She said," added Carlyle, "that you were so fond of children you'd enjoy having us with you all the time."

The fragment of cream toast remained poised on my fork in mid-air. Silvia was right. This was no time for levity.

"Milk—milk," whimpered Diogenes, pulling at my wife's dress.

Huldah had come in with the griddle cakes during the avalanche of Polydores.

"Here, all you younguns!" she exclaimed, picking up Diogenes, "beat it into the kitchen, and I'll give you your breakfast."

The Polydores, their eyes shining with happiness and semi-starvation, tumbled over each other in their eagerness to "beat it" to the culinary precincts. Our oiler of troubled waters followed.

"What shall we do?" I exclaimed to Silvia when the last Polydore had disappeared from view.

"Do!" she exclaimed with more intensity than I had ever known her to display. "We'll not submit for a moment to such an imposition. I never heard of such a thing. That father and mother should be brought back and prosecuted. We won't wait for that, however. We'll express each and every child to them at once."

"I should certainly do that P. D. Q. and C. O. D. if they could be found, but you know the abodes of aborigines are many and scattered."

Silvia opened the door into the kitchen.

"Ptolemy," she demanded, "where have your father and mother gone?"

"I don't know," he replied in a voice smothered by chicken and griddle cakes.

"We can find out from the ticket agent," I hastened to assure her.

"They never bother to buy tickets. Pay on trains," explained the wet blanket.

"We can easily ascertain to what point their baggage was checked," I again remarked, assaying to maintain my role of comforter.

But the pessimistic Ptolemy continued to utter his gloom-casting confidences.

"They only took suit-cases and they always carry them. Here's a check father said to give you to pay for keeping us. He said to write in any amount you wanted to."

He handed over a check which was made out to me and signed by Felix Polydore. The space for the amount was left blank.

"What shall we do?" I again exclaimed when my wife had closed the kitchen door.

Silvia was eyeing the check wistfully.

We had recently sustained some financial losses, which prompted the unspoken question as she lifted her glance to meet my scrutiny.

"No," I answered. "Not for any number of blank checks shall you have the care and worry of those wild Comanches."

"I'll go to the intelligence office and get a maid-of-all-work," she planned, "and put her in charge of the Polydore caravansary."

When I returned home at noon I beheld a strange sight. Silvia sat by our bedroom window, twittering soft cooing nonsense to Diogenes, who was clasped in her arms, his face pressed against her shoulder.

"He's been quite ill, Theron. I was frightened until I called the doctor, but he said it was only some childish ailment."

"Did you succeed in getting a cook? You'll need a nurse, too, for the baby."

She looked at me rebukingly.

"Why, Theron, I couldn't send this sick baby back to that awful house with only hired help in charge. Besides, I don't believe he'd stay with a stranger. He seems to have taken a fancy to me."

The child confirmed this belief by a languid lifting of his eyelids as he feebly patted her cheek with his baby fingers.

I didn't dare to suggest that the fancy seemed to be mutual. It occurred to me that the care of a sick Polydore might develop her tiny germ of child-ken.

"Keep him of course, but the other children shall go."

"Diogenes would miss them, and the doctor said his whims must be humored while he was sick. I think he'll let me put him in his bed now. Ptolemy brought it over. Pull back the covers—there!"

The child half opened his eyes and smiled wanly.

"Mudder!" he cooed.

Silvia flushed and looked as if she dreaded an expression of mirth from me. Relieved by my solemn silence, she confessed: "He has called me that all the morning."

"It would be a wise Polydore that knew its own parent," I observed.

The slight illness of Diogenes lasted for two or three days. I still shudder to recall the memory of that hideous era.

Polydore proclivities made the Reign of Terror known as the French Revolution seem like an ice cream festival. Their war hoops and screeches got on my nerves to the extent of sending me into their midst brandishing a horsewhip and commanding silence. I got it. Not through fear, but through their perplexity to account for so unexpected a revolt. Before they had recovered from their shock of surprise, Silvia appeared.

Diogenes, she announced, was not used to somnolent silence and was fretting at the unwonted quiet. Would the boys please play Indian again? The boys would. I backed away, carefully keeping the whip without Silvia's angle of vision.

I wished we had remained neighborless. I wished the aborigines would scalp the parents of the Polydores. I wished this were the reign of Herod. I vowed I would backslide from the Presbyterian faith since it no longer included in its articles of belief the eternal damnation of infants. "How long, O Catiline—"

A paralyzing thought had come to me. I rushed wildly upstairs to where Silvia sat beside the Polydore patient.

"Silvia," I shouted, "do you suppose those unnatural Polydore parents purposely played this trick on us? Was it a premeditated Polydore scheme to abandon their young? Do you suppose any parents would come back to such imps as these?"

"Hush!" she cautioned. "You'll wake Diogenes."

Wake Diogenes! And she had begged the boys to continue their noise! This took the last stitch of starch from my manly bosom. Spiritless and spineless I bore all things, endured all things, believed all things, but hoped for nothing.

The baby finally convalesced to his former Polydore ruggedness. He continued to call Silvia, "Mudder," and to my amusement the other children followed his example. She was "muddered" by all the Polydores, although they scorned to include me in their adoption.

"I am going down to the intelligence office today," said Silvia one day when Diogenes had entirely recovered.

When I came home that afternoon I found her sitting on the porch serenely sewing. Not one Polydore was in sight!

"Oh, the children are back in their quarters!" I cried buoyantly.

"No," she replied calmly. "They told me at the intelligence office that it would be absolutely impossible to persuade a servant to go there."

"I suppose the predecessors of the long-suffering Emma gave the place a double cross. Will you please account for the phenomenon of the utter absence of the Polydores at the present period?"

"Pythagoras got something in his eye and has gone to the doctor's. Diogenes is lost and Carlyle is hunting for him. Hudah locked Emerson in the cellar. I am unable to report on Ptolemy. Huldah is sick, but she wouldn't go to bed. She said no beds in Bedlamite for her. There's relief in sight if you'll consent."

"I'll consent to any commitable crime that will lead to the parting of the Polydore path from ours. Reveal!"

"You have been planning a vacation for some time. We surely need one. Like the Polydore parents we will leave the haunts of civilization. I heard today of a beautiful, inexpensive resort called Rugged Rocks. It's sixteen miles from a railroad and a boat stops there but twice a month."

"We'll go! Shall we leave the brats to their fate?"

"No, to Huldah. She offered to take them. Said she would let them have free rein."

"I see where the Polydores land in a juvenile jail. We'll take our departure by night—tomorrow night—and, like the Arabs, or the Polydores, silently steal away."

"Theron," said Silvia shyly after we had laid our plans, "if you don't mind I'd like to take Diogenes. He hasn't missed his mother, but I think he'd be homesick without me."

"Take him, of course. He isn't so bad when he's away from the others."

Softly, stealthily, and joyously we prepared for our Arabian steal-away. When we were aboard the train the next night, Silvia gave a long sigh of relief. For once we had outwitted the Polydores. At least we thought we had. We reached the station nearest to Rugged Rocks early the next morning and rode by stage to the resort. We enjoyed a blissful day and night. The second day after our arrival, when the stage drove up, Silvia grasped my arm.

"Look!" she murmured with a shudder.

I looked. There was one passenger alighting with calm dignity. Diogenes gave a welcoming, recognizing whoop.

"Ptolemy," I demanded sternly, "what did you come here for?"

"To look after Di so you and mudder could enjoy your vacation."

"How did you know we were here?" asked Silvia.

"I was on top of the porch when you told Mr. Tomlins about coming. I didn't tell anyone. I won't bother you any. And I know how to take care of Di.

You won't send me back!" he pleaded as he looked wistfully at the sparkling foam crested water and then up into Silvia's face.

Could Silvia resist such longing as was depicted in the upturned, appealing face of the neglected boy and the delight of the baby at Tolly's arrival? She could not.

"You may stay as long as we do if you are a good boy and will play in the sand with the baby."

With a wild ki-yi Ptolemy dashed for the shore dragging the delighted Diogenes after him.

Ptolemy proved to be an excellent nursemaid. In the eyes of the resorters we passed for a very domestic family.

At the end of four delightful weeks we returned home.

"Your uncle was here for a day," informed Huldah.

"Uncle Issachar!" exclaimed Silvia wildly.

"Yes ma'am. I couldn't tell him where you was because I want supposed to know. Here's a letter he left for you."

Silvia hastily read the letter, gasped, reread it, and then handed it to me. This was the sum and substance.

"My dear Niece,

I was sorry not to see you but glad to learn that, as a wise and good woman should do, you are raising a fine family. Your son Emerson informed me you had taken your oldest and youngest with you. Therefore, agreeable to my promise, I have placed in your First National Bank the sum of $25,000 in your name.

Your affectionate Uncle,
Issachar Imes."

"Huldah, did you tell him these were our children?"

"Me?" she asked innocently. "No, I didn't get no chance to speak. These younguns did the talking. The first thing Emerson said was: 'Mudder went away and took the baby and brother Tolly went after them.' The old gent seemed so pleased and thought it so fine in you to have five sons that I didn't have no heart to tell him different. He liked their names. Said they were so classy."

"Didn't he say classic?" asked Silvia mechanically.

"Mebby; what's the difference?" said Huldah.

"I suppose they behaved terribly," said my wife, dodging a definition.

"How else could they behave? He was settin' on the lawn asleep and Thaggy dropped a little kitten from the upstairs window on his bald head. It clawed fierce. I roasted an onion for Emerson's earache and he slipped it down the old man's back. Carlyle put a toad in his pocket and—"

"Oh, stop!" implored Silvia. "And he believes them mine and that I brought them up!"

"He said you had brung them up fine and that they want no mollycoddles."

"Why didn't you tell him who you were?" I demanded of Pythoragas.

"Because, she is our 'mudder' and we are going to stay with her always. And he said he was going to give her five thousand dollars apiece for us and I thought we'd be worth that to you, so we didn't let on."

"I'll write tomorrow and explain," said Silvia with a sigh.

Late that night there was a ring at the door. I answered, and received a telegram which I read in the hall.

"Silvia," I said gravely as I came to her bedside, "your uncle Issachar is dead. Heart disease. Very sudden."

The Sixth Question

BY WILLIAM JOHNSTON

In search for a companion-soldier of fortune, five questions are asked and satisfactorily answered. So was the sixth question, which makes the adventure.

IT lacked five minutes of six by City Hall's four-faced clock when Krider reached the spot he had selected with so much care—the exact centre of the asphalt in a direct line between the Declaration table and the Nathan Hale statue. The evening was bitter cold. The east wind bit savagely at the faces of the home-hurrying throng. Leaden clouds hanging low over the rivers promised a white tomorrow. The park fountain robbed of its spray, presented its dry gaping basin as a convenient receptacle for the dust and debris with which miniature whirlwinds were playing bothersome pranks. The park benches, not long since populous with veterans of the Army of the Unemployed, now were as bare as the branches of the unclad trees that cast fantastic shadows over them.

Absorbed as he was in his strange mission Krider could not help gazing curiously about him. He could not recall ever having been in the vicinity of so many tall buildings at such an hour. He had a curious sensation of being in an artificial twilight. His artist eye saw, not so much the bold brilliancy of the globed arcs that gave the asphalt underneath almost the light of noon, as it did of the softer tints of the work-world all about him. Yellow beams from the office where, the routine of the day at last completed, a weary mayor sat signing, signing, signing his name to parchments that meant a bond issue of millions, mingled with the ghastly blue of the mercury tubes under which tired postal clerks were struggling with tomorrow morning's mail. Over by the Bridge the thousand windows of Newspaper Row glittered like eager eyes forever watching a wicked world. On either side of where Krider stood, yellow, yawning subway mouths were gulping down their nightly portion of Harlemites.

As with his eye he measured the asphalt, Krider began to compliment himself on the wisdom with which he had selected the place. As he had anticipated he found himself in an oasis of solitude surrounded by a Sahara of hurry. He was near enough to the passing throng to be observed by all who chose to notice him yet far enough from the thickly traveled paths to prevent his being disturbed in carrying out his plans.

A glance at the nearest clock-face as he heard the sound of distant bells and whistles, warned him that the hour had come. Verifying his position, he faced the north and stooping to the pavement traced with his finger a Roman "V" on the asphalt. Straightening himself to military erectness, he folded his arms and then slowly repeated the mystic phrase by which he sought the result that would be of such vast importance to the carrying out of his life-work:

"Rouf—Eerht—Owt—Eno."

Two or three passers-by, attracted by his curious actions, deflected their course to approach nearer, but possibly judging

him a mendicant because of the shabby ulster he wore, dodged quickly past him. A gum-chewing shop girl, pausing in her conversation with her lady friend to stare curiously at him, muttered, "bug-house, I guess," and passed on. A book-keeper, bustling by to Brooklyn, sagely remarked to his companion, "Clever dodges these street fakirs have for catching a crowd." Still no one stopped, even though at minute-intervals he kept repeating the mystic phrase.

Four times more he uttered the words without result. Turning to face the east he repeated the symbol on the asphalt and again standing erect, five times more repeated the mystic words.

Had the weather been warmer, had the hour been earlier, Krider might soon have had a crowd about him. As it was, not more than a dozen of the passing hundreds gave him more than a grudging glance. During the work day, in the employer's time, the merest trifle—the raising of a safe, the fall of a horse, a newsboy's squabble, anything at all will cause a crowd to collect and linger. But after six o'clock it is vastly different. One's time is one's own and is not to be wasted.

Chilled through and almost despairing Krider turned to the south to repeat his symbol and his mystic phrase. Doubt of the wisdom of his proceeding began to creep into his brain, even though he distinctly recalled the calm conviction that had come to him that his mission must succeed. As he lay nervously exhausted and sleepless, the night before, his great achievement at last brought within range of possibility, a voice within him seemed to say:

"Go to the place. At six o'clock precisely take your stand there. Write the symbol to the north, to the east, to the south, to the west, each time repeating the mystic words. They shall be a sign to him whom you must have to accompany you. He will be the first to speak to you. Ask him the five questions—nothing less, nothing more."

"But," Krider remembered having asked himself, "suppose he will not come with me?"

"He will come," he heard the voice within reply oracularly.

Under the spell of his inner self, Krider, exhausted as he was by his years of application to the great idea, had not realized the absurdity of the task at which he found himself. All at once he began to experience the same silly shame he had felt in his first year at the Polytechnic when his hazers had set him on a street corner and bade him sing "Rock of Ages" backward. Yet ridiculous as he realized that his actions must appear, he had no thought of desisting before the entire ceremonial was completed. Resolutely he turned to face the west.

As he did so he became aware that he was being closely watched by a man almost as tall as himself, a man with a pleasant Celtic face. A ray of hope came into his heart. Perhaps this was the man of whom he was in search. Stooping quickly he drew the figure "V" almost at the feet of the onlooker. Before he had time to repeat the mystic phrase he heard the man ask:

"Five what?"

Sternly repressing the feeling of jubilation that swept over him, Krider linked his arm in that of the stranger, whispering:

"Come with me."

"You didn't answer my question," persisted the stranger, who nevertheless fell into step with Krider without protest, walking with him across the park, along the narrow path between the two court houses, out past the gaudy Hall of Records and up Lafayette Street.

"It will be answered," Krider replied and thereafter they walked in silence, each studying the other.

When three or four blocks had been traversed, Krider turned to the left and led the way into an ancient tavern.

"Though I can't say much for your language, I like your ways," Krider's companion remarked cheerfully as Krider marched him into a deserted back room and bade the waiter bring them Scotch and soda. He did not speak until the waiter had filled the order and departed, leaving them alone. Abruptly then he asked:

"Are you married?"

"It's a life insurance game then, is it?" grinned his companion. "Well I don't mind saying I like the way you go at it. But do you think if I was married I'd be trapsin' off here with you for a drink. Faith, I'd be hustlin' home to Mrs. Kelly and the kids. I'll admit me clothes are shabby enough to be those of a married man, but tell me now, honest, do I look like one?"

"Are you married?" Krider repeated sternly.

"Why should I be telling you?" asked Kelly tartly. "After all, it's a man's own business. Them that are married don't like to be reminded of it and neither do them that ain't. It's a funny business anyhow. Them that tries it knows it don't pay and them that don't try it thinks the same of it, yet people keep on doing it. Am I married? Well, since I'm drinking your drink, I suppose, for manner's sake, I must be answering your question. Am I married? Praise be, I'm not."

"Are you employed?"

"Oh, ho," said Kelly, "I see your game now. It's a charity investigator you are, trying to solve the problem of the unemployed, mayhap. I knew me trousers were last year's style and that me shirt had been neglectin' its calls at the laundry, but never did I think that I looked bad enough to be investigated."

He stopped to study Krider's face, wondering if he was on the right tack, but in the ascetic countenance of his inquisitor was to be read only impatient expectancy of his answer.

"Am I unemployed?" Kelly went on. "Sure and a man of intellect never is unemployed. It may be that his occupation, like me own at present, ain't always meeting with proper and satisfactory financial reward, but what of that. The money-making ability requires the lowest form of intelligence. I'll say this much though, that communing too long with your own intellect, for an occupation, disagrees with the stomach. If it is a job you have to offer, I'll consider anything fair so long as it's nothing that will prevent me looking meself in the face in the glass mornings or lifting a glass in the evenings. Putting it plainly, through no fault of me own I'm out of a job and willing to take one."

"Are you afraid?" snapped Krider.

"I'm after seeing your game now," grinned Kelly amiably. "It's five questions you'll be asking me and this is the third. Am I afraid? And me with the name of Kelly. Why, man, the Kellys is the people they make fighters of. Did you never hear tell of Colonel Kelly, the daredevil old soldier? And Spike Kelly, who fought fourteen rounds with the champion? And Spider Kelly the welter-weight, and Pat Kelly, and all the rest of them? A Kelly afraid? If you'd been over to the Night Court with me the other night and heard Mrs. Grogan, born Kelly, laying out the judge, you wouldn't be asking a Kelly if he was afraid. And there was old John Kelly, too,—maybe you've heard tell of him—the one that was leader of Tammany when Croker was driving a horse car and long before Charley Murphy had begun tending bar. No man that's afraid will ever be leader at the Hall. There's too many wanting the throne

and the pickings for a coward to ever be sitting on it. John Kelly—if you'd been where I've been for the last three weeks, you'd know of John Kelly. The alcoholic ward in the hospital is full of tablets to his memory, God rest him, and the sisters are always talking of his charity. But getting back to your question—am I afraid? There's just three things a Kelly's afraid of: to refuse good liquor, to pass up a pretty girl, and to go back on his word."

"Are you willing?" asked Krider, accepting the subtle hint in the answer and calling the waiter to refill their glasses.

Kelly thoughtfully sipped his liquor and cogitated.

"I'm not much good at riddles," he replied finally, "and it is beyond me to see what you are driving at. Am I married? Am I employed? Am I afraid? And now—am I willing? There ain't any war yet with Japan, or in Panama, or I might think you were getting up a filibustering expedition. I've heard of no plan to blow up a battleship or kidnap a millionaire's son. I'll admit that in the last few weeks there have been days when my brains belonged more to the drink than they did to meself but I don't recollect having applied for membership in any secret order. You've got me. I can't figure out what sort of a job it can be. If it was for one of the big corportions you'd have quit when you found out I had no wife. An unmarried man stands no chance with them. Husbands have a ball and chain on them and don't run away when wages are reduced. It's a fatherly interest most employers take in getting their employees married. Why not? It means that thereafter they will be chained to their jobs with the wife and the little ones and the grocery bill and the installment man as fetters. With a bachelor it's different. If an unmarried man ain't treated right he tells the boss to go to and he beats it. It's young blood in the labor unions that makes them so independent. If all men were husbands there would be no more strikes. But once more getting back to your question—am I willing? I am."

"Are you ready?"

Kelly lifted his glass and drained it to the last drop before replying.

"Sure and an Irishman never is ready till the liquor's all gone. One should never be hasty in leaving good whiskey. You never can tell when you're going to get back to it. But you're asking me if I'm ready. Why not? Me wardrobe is all on me back. Neither wife nor wages is waiting for me. None of the banks will be worrying if I don't draw checks on them. Me chauffeur will not get impatient waiting for me. The fellow I was crossing the park to borrow a dollar from won't die of disappointment at not seeing me. If it means a bite to eat and a place to sleep, I'm ready. Whatever my mind may think about it, both me mouth and me stomach are crying out 'yes.' "

"You're just the man," exclaimed Krider with enthusiasm.

Rising from the table, he flung back his ulster and stood there with one arm outstretched dramatically. Into his tired eyes came the light of victory. His whole face glowed as if with some magnificent vision.

"Kelly," he shouted, "Kelly,—if that is your name,—I am going to make you rich. I am going to make you famous. I am going to make us both rich, both famous. Our names will be celebrated in history. We will be welcomed by kings and courts, by the people of all nations. I, Martin Krider, am going—"

He paused, overwhelmed by the magnitude of his own prophecies, striving to find words in which to properly paint the picture of the future as he saw it.

"I am going—" he paused again.

"Go on," said Kelly.

But Krider did not go on. He drew his ulster together around his tall form and sat down abruptly, not, however, before his keen-eyed companion had noted that the ulster hid a cheap workman's blouse—a fact apparently noted also by the bartender, whose entrance was the cause of Krider's oratorical flight being so suddenly ended.

"Here, you," said Krider, "bring us some more drinks and call a taxicab."

"You'll be showing the money for what you've had before you get any more," said the bartender decisively. "Calling for taxis don't help your credit here."

A look of concern over the prospect of being violently ejected came into Kelly's face, but Krider only smiled. Leisurely he spread back the faded ulster and, plunging his hand into the depths of his trousers' pocket, brought forth an enormous roll of bills. There was money, money, money, more than either Kelly or the bartender had ever seen at one time in their lives. Krider lifted the wrapper—it was a thousand dollar bill—and extended it carelessly toward the bartender.

"Take the drinks out of that," he said graciously, "and call a taxi."

"Is it the smallest you've got?" gasped the bartender, his eyes opening wide as he saw that the second bill in Krider's roll was of the same denomination.

As for Kelly, any doubts he might have entertained about Krider had now entirely vanished. Whatever it was that Krider wanted of him, he felt that he was ready to do it. Never before in his whole life had he come into such intimacy with so much money as his mysterious host appeared to have.

Krider tossed over the bundle of bills in search of a smaller one. There were more thousands, and hundreds and fifties and twenties. Apparently the smallest was a twenty.

"I can change that," said the bartender respectfully, "and by the time you've had your drinks the taxi will be waiting for you."

They drank the third in silence, Krider apparently enjoying the amazement the others had exhibited at his wealth, and Kelly still stupefied at the sight of so much real money. The taxicab came and they entered it, Krider giving a brief order to the chauffeur.

"Was it the Hotel St. Royal you told him?"

"It was," answered Krider tersely.

"I'm thinking," said Kelly reflectively after a moment's pause, "I'm hardly dressed for the St. Royal, in fact"—his mind reverting to the workman's blouse his companion wore—"I'm doubting if we'll be let in."

"Don't worry. I live there."

It was too much for Kelly. He was now thoroughly mystified. What manner of man was this, anyhow, who dressed in a workman's blouse and lived at the St. Royal, who stood jabbering in the park with thousands of dollars in his pocket? A dozen questions he wanted to ask came to his lips but he refrained from uttering them. What was the use of it? He decided that the wisest course was to patiently await developments.

"There's one thing about it," he said to himself philosophically, "it's them that has money that can afford to be crazy, and Krider certainly has got it."

With eyes and ears alert, studying his companion closely, and all the while wondering what it was that Krider wanted of him Kelly found himself unconsciously assuming the defensive as they alighted at the St. Royal. To be sure he had seen Krider's money, but still he doubted the nature of their reception.

He could hardly believe it when kowtowing servants in livery greeted Krider by name and held open the doors for them.

The next three hours passed as in a pleasant dream. In Krider's luxuriously furnished apartments a soft-footed Japanese servant ministered to their wants, brought them iced drinks, and laid out for Kelly evening raiment of Krider's that fitted him almost perfectly.

"Before we get to business," Krider had said, "let us celebrate with a jolly little dinner."

To Kelly, living as he had been for weeks on the little end of nothing, the meal that Krider had called a jolly little dinner was a royal banquet. From cocktails to coffee his host kept up a delightful line of small talk. He told incidents of his college days. He recounted amusing stories of travel. With all the skill of an excellent raconteur he described thrilling adventures in all parts of the world where it appeared his work as an engineer had taken him. But though he talked constantly and seemingly with great frankness, not a hint did he drop as to why he had sought Kelly's acquaintance. It was nearly ten o'clock when they got up from the table and Krider led the way to his rooms.

Kelly, at a hint from his host, donned his own well-worn clothes while Krider appeared garbed in a leather suit. As they left the apartment, Kelly, still mystified as to their destination, noted with satisfaction that the last thing Krider did was to slip into a pocket in his leather suit the roll of bills he had showed earlier in the evening. They entered a taxicab and drove south and west until they were only a block away from the river, where Krider dismissed the cab. Waiting on the corner until it was out of sight, he touched Kelly on the arm with a whispered, "Come."

The glimpse of his face that Kelly caught as they passed under a street lamp, showed a far different aspect from that worn by his host at dinner. It was once more the countenance of an ascetic and in the eyes burned the fierce light of fanaticism. Down a dark street, up an alley, down a block, Krider led him, every once in a while turning as if to make sure they were not being followed. At last he stopped before a padlocked gate in a high fence. Looking up and down the street and seeing no one in sight, he unfastened the lock, pushed Kelly within, hastily followed himself, and closed the gate behind them, bringing the lock inside, but, as Kelly noted with some satisfaction, neglecting to lock it again.

Kelly, anticipating that their strange journey was near an end, gazed curiously about him. So far as he could see, they were in a vacant lot that once might have been used for storing lumber. In one corner of it was a long, low shedlike structure, and toward it Krider hastily led the way. With unerring step he brought up in the darkness before a door, likewise padlocked. Unlocking it he grasped Kelly by the arm and led him within. Kelly strained his eyes but could see nothing except a wall of blackness ahead of him, though he could feel the fingers of his guide on his arm quiver with excitement. Krider, without a word felt his way along the side of the shed for a few yards and came to an abrupt stop.

"Kelly," he hissed in a voice vibrant with excitement, "you are about to behold the greatest wonder of the world, something that no mortal eyes save my own have ever seen, something that will make new pages in history. I am about to reveal to you, and to you alone, a secret, my great secret, that for many many months has given me days and nights of unceasing labor and anxiety. When I press these two buttons on which my fingers rest you will see—"

Even as he spoke he pressed the buttons. Hundreds of lights flashed into being at once, giving the shed the brilliancy of day. A great black curtain

parted in the middle and automatically folded itself back against the side walls. Kelly, half-blinded by the sudden blaze of light, gazed fascinated at what he saw before him.

Strung by wires above eight great brilliantly polished cylinders of steel, were two aluminum wings hardly ten feet from tip to tip.

"Behold," cried Krider in tones of triumph, "the Krider Ocean-going Aeroplane, which is to revolutionize aviation. With a thousand horse-power to its thousand pounds, it will travel two hundred and twenty miles an hour. I completed it only last night. It needs two men to run it. Those two men are to be you and I. We will leave here on it at midnight tonight and in seventeen hours we'll be in London. Everything is ready. Come."

"Hold on," said Kelly determinedly, "there's one more question you forgot to ask before you picked me, and since you didn't ask it I'll ask it myself."

"What's that?" asked Krider irritably, as he gazed admiringly at his craft.

"Am I weak-minded? I'm not," cried Kelly, backing quickly out of the door and disappearing in the darkness.

A Sky-piercing Fisher of Men

BY U. S. PARSONS

A typical town booster goes up in a balloon to advertise his town. He has a mishap, feels "the wings of the Angel of Death" and then out of his own pocket builds a new steeple for the church.

AT a window in the Welcome Club, Rennison, an old resident, and his friend, Kummer, a recent addition to a city with metropolitan aspirations, were listening to the humming of the booster bee. Across the street, heavily decorated for a carnival on the following day, a flamboyant billboard announced the ascent, in a balloon, at two o'clock in the afternoon, of one of the leading citizens.

"For advertisement purposes?" asked Kummer.

"Right again," responded Rennison. "Ballooning is rather old-fashioned, and I wonder that the Chamber of Commerce did not insist on Bulger's advertising his Thousand Willow Homestead Tract by the use of an aeroplane, but the old boy is a sort of half-baked aeronaut, and, as for advertising, leave it to him." Kummer here noticed the great ecclesiastical pile on the corner, undergoing demolition.

"Further evidence of progress."

"Yes, that church was built twenty-six years ago, and the last carpenter who worked in the steeple frame left a bottle of whiskey and a pack of cards securely wedged between the timbers just below the finial. Of course the good people of the church could not get at the devil's ambassadors up there, so they tried to hush the matter up. They never succeeded though, for the affair has bobbed up at regular intervals for years."

"The editor of the *Daily Pulse* doesn't agree with you," laughed Kummer. "This morning's edition comments on the old yarn, and says that the material evidence was lacking in the wreckage of the old tower."

"Which is all booster bosh," retorted Rennison, with a grin of satisfaction. "I bribed the wreckers and secured the trophies, without their knowing the nature of my find. The cards were much the worse for the weather, but the whiskey shared the good luck of drunkards in perilous places, and came down securely sealed, and ready for use, by two fellows who can appreciate fine rye that has been packed in sacred wood for more than a quarter of a century."

"Thanks," exclaimed Kummer, glancing aside at an interrupting party of four, led by a red and rotund individual who headed for the adjoining window. "You certainly do know how to advertise here."

"A My City highball for mine. And, say, Gibson, bring the gentlemen some of Our Harbor Brand of smokers."

Booster Bulger turned to his Three Prospects.

"Select Cuban stock from the King Edward reservation, gentlemen, imported by the Chamber of Commerce especially for visitin' friends. You'll find 'em excellent."

Rennison glanced warily at Bulger, who, after a four-cornered toast to

progress and Prosperity, continued.

"No siree, you can't keep this town back. Twenty-six miles of water front, railway terminals, real estate values doubled in three years, population ditto, building permits ditto, and all done steadily and quietly, by an incoming army of homeseekers, who find in this city of definite destiny, the land of milk and honey. Now's your chance, Major."

Mr. Bulger familiarly tapped Mr. Bayard of Boston on the shoulder. That quiet tourist, with shocking irrelevancy, responded: "I understand that you are to be the chief actor today, in a curtain-raiser for the celebration tomorrow." Bulger, chuckling, rose to lead his new acquaintance away.

"Yes, yes, I'll be a sky pilot this afternoon all right. I've had a checkered career in high places."

"Good heavens!" blurted the sarcastic Rennison, "if this city's boosting antics have been done quietly, then, for a Sabbath calm, a boiler-shop in a busy season, has the inter-stellar spaces beaten to a frazzle. Bulger is a good enough fellow, who has risen by sheer force of character, but the booster bug is his bane. Like all his kind, he is chiefly useful in promoting the gayety of nations. One of his peculiarities is his proneness to change his mind over night, in political and kindred matters. He's energetic, anyway, and no one ever knew Bulger to go back on a promise. I expect, after his blue sky operations this afternoon, he'll be at the Steeple Meeting tonight at St. John's Church."

"That's the kind of religious gathering that is new to me."

"Yes, the former worshippers in the old building across the street have built a steel and stone church costing a quarter of a million, a monument of beauty with one exception—the steeple. It's about as appropriate to a building of that character, as a broomstick for a parade ground flagstaff. The architect being away on a vacation, there is now no difference of opinion about that tower. It's only a question of ways and means. The trustees have gone the limit of their finances, and the Chamber of Commerce, the Builders Exchange, and the Merchants Association, will all be self-constituted trustees tonight, and take a hand. Boosting makes queer bedfellows, you know. If you want to see a real love feast, Kummer, meet me at seven."

Rennison did not know that Kummer, an expert architect, had an engagement with the pastor of this same church, to talk over possible changes in the spire. Of course Kummer would be at the meeting as a spectator, but he was sorry that his engagement with the minister would prevent his presence at the balloon ascension.

But several thousand lusty-lunged city improvers were at the grounds with a band and a battery of moving picture machines, and promptly at the hour of two, the balloon and its two-hundred-and-forty-pound occupant rose lazily from the earth. Flaming decorations, calling investors' attention to the advantages of homes in the Thousand Willows Tract, were not wanting in the sky that day. Gazing upward, the tourist could learn that lots in a heavenly land were obtainable for fifteen dollars down, and five dollars per month, with all kinds of satisfactory guarantees.

Mr. Bulger's square visage beamed two hundred feet from the ground in response to the shouts of the assembled multitude, but it was destined to smile at no higher altitude. Strange to say, in this hustling municipality, the balloon was short of gas and sand. After reaching the height mentioned, it merely drifted in a northerly direction across the city, and came in contact with the highest object. The ropes, from which were

suspended several gaudy appeals to purchasers of realty, becoming entangled in the ornate cross on St. John's needle-like spine, Mr. Bulger and his balloon were securely anchored to steel and concrete.

In vain the amateur aeronaut attempted to extricate himself. The ropes were as securely tied to the finial as if knotted by the fingers of an old salt. The crowd below, largely juvenile now, gazed open-mouthed upward. Bulger gripped the side of his careening basket, and despairingly gazed downward. The wobbling monster above him hastened his decision, and he acted quickly. Tying a loose piece of rope to his waist, he scrambled over the edge of the basket. Grasping the ecclesiastical anchor rope, he slid as nimbly as an eighty-pound acrobat, down to the top of the troublesome steeple. Pausing a moment, he cut the anchoring ropes, and rid himself of his deceitful partner of the sky, which, relieved of its late load, rose and floated off with the fiery legends of "My City" flapping energetically in the breeze.

Now, there may be some who think that Bulger was foolhardy in making this descent, no flying-machine being near to rescue him from his perch, one hundred and eighty-five feet and seven inches from the ground. Some wise-acres would have released sufficient gas to have enabled the balloon to descend to the earth. But it would not have descended that far. The entangling rope was but fifteen feet long, and in such an emergency, both Bulger and a gasless balloon would have hung from the top of the steeple one hundred and seventy feet from the earth.

So Bulger did what most people would do under similar perils. He longed for something steady and enduring to cling to, and cling he did. He did more. He succeeded, by wrapping his arms and legs about the surmounting cross, in getting enough freedom with his hands to splice the ends of the two ropes. Then this heavy citizen, in a tight place, began slowly to slide down the means of descent thus provided. But, alas, it soon became painfully evident, both to Bulger and to the people below, that the rope was far too short. It left him suspended eighty feet above the sidewalk at the level of the floor of the bell platform. Here he tried to swing himself into the great open window through which the bell had been hoisted the day before, but each time his feet fell short.

Every man below, but three, was paralyzed with horror, and this trio, realizing the impossibility of reaching him on the outside, were trying vainly to get into the church. Four times he swung to the edge of the window, and four times missed his footing and swung back over the yawning precipice. Had he possessed reserve strength and some slack rope, he might have made a supporting loop about his body, but it was too late. The tantilizing window offered the only possibility of rescue. Only the strength that comes with despair enabled him to cling to the end of the rope, and that power was almost gone. Once more he tried desperately to gain a foothold, and again swung back. It did not seem possible that the unfortunate man could cling one moment longer. But help was near, and the realization nerved his hands to a superhuman effort.

The minister had been left in the bell room by the architect, who had gone further up in his tour of inspection. Seizing a great plank that had been used in hanging the bell, Dr. Garber thrust one end under the iron railing of the stairs, and dragged the other out over the edge. Four feet of protruding support were thus afforded the almost exhausted man. Still clinging to the rope, and steadied by the hand of the minister, who leaned perilously out in his offer to rescue, the bulky form

of Bulger at last reached safety.

Pale and breathless, his coat torn and his hands bleeding, he leaned weakly against the wall, and looked into the astonished face of the old minister. The latter, ignorant of the disastrous outcome of the ascension, was unable to understand why Bulger had come dangling down at the end of a rope on the spire of St. John's, with a lusty cry for help. With his stiff hair dishevelled, and his necktie awry, the preacher leaned forward in a reproving attitude.

"You re—, do you re—" Dr. Garber paused, and seemed momentarily embarrassed by the resolute expression in the face of the other. The light of memory shone in the old minister's eyes, and, for Bulger, who was now meet for repentance, there was but one interpretation of the incomplete interrogation. Many a worse man than he had seen a great light in the face of despair and danger.

"You bet I do, Doctor. I heard the brushings of the Death Angel's wings today. I have been mercifully saved, and I give God the glory. That's straight, and here's my hand on it." Bulger's jaw was set in characteristic determination.

Ineffable happiness flamed in the face of the elder man as he heard those words. They foretold the home-coming of a prodigal for whom the preacher had yearned and prayed for many a year. The gap of time was bridged. Again he was the middle-aged minister of God, and Bulger was once more a youth.

"Hear the dear boy," he declared gleefully and admiringly, as if addressing a congregation of saints. "I don't know the meaning of all this, Danny, but come down into my study where you can wash, and I can listen."

And Daniel Bulger's eyes were glistening, as, with his old friend's arm across his shoulder, the two turned to the descending stairway. Just above them, seeing but unseen, stood the architect, amazed, not only at the presence of Bulger there, but at the scene he had witnessed.

"They certainly do move in a mysterious way out in this country," he thought. "At eleven o'clock I see a gray-headed old sport doing the handsome in Old Scotch and Flor de Havana, to his friends at the club. At two, he is ballooning, for pleasure and revenue. At three, he is a convert at a mourner's bench in a steeple. What do you know about that? And now the old preacher has evidently forgotten his business with me, and as the heart-to-heart talk in the study will be a long one, I may as well leave and call another day. The dominie was not very hopeful of financial support to the steeple project anyway."

Having come from a community that has found itself, (and is satisfied with the discovery), and where the inhabitants do not take large doses of parks, docks, boulevards and bonds before every meal, and at bed time, Kummer would be considered frigid by the devotees of the popular local religion. Nevertheless, when, two hours later, he read the account of Bulger's mishap in the evening paper, he decided to follow the crowd with Rennison.

And there was indeed a crowd. Long before the opening of the church doors, the sidewalk was packed to the curb with a motley mass of humanity who dearly love a meeting that is both free and sensational. At seven o'clock every pew in the vast auditorium was filled. Fifteen minutes later chairs were brought into use, and at half past seven, aisles and stairways were obliterated in violation of a state law.

The Progress and Prosperity delegation smacked their lips as they witnessed the outpouring. To them, it was evi-

dence of the growing importance of their city, and a foretaste of that glorious day when Little Old New York would be forced to look to its laurels.

To the right and left of the Reverend John Garber sat representatives of various civic bodies, bent on providing a statelier steeple, first for the city, and incidentally for the church. Probably, a realization of this fact was responsible for Dr. Garber's rather listless air. Had that tremendous throng been brought there by real interest in some great moral uplift, the good man would have soared away to the seventh heaven of happiness.

The great organ pealed, and the mighty congregation rose in one vast wave to sing: "How firm a foundation, ye Saints of the Lord." While the notes of the final stanza still rang through the arches, a stalwart man, straight as an arrow, his square and florid face lighted with inspiration, was seen elbowing his way to the pulpit. It was Bulger, who, with the exception of his bandaged hands, looked none the worse for his trying experience of a few hours before.

As if in obedience to a pre-arranged plan, Bulger mounted the platform, and stood beside the minister. When the congregation had regained their seats, a sudden and intense stillness settled down over the host. In a brief and business-like way the pastor introduced Bulger to the assembly. "A man," said he, "whom you all know, and delight to honor." At the introduction, the feminine religious element waved the Chautauqua salute, and the masses on railings and stairways broke into loud applause.

"Thank you, thank you, friends. You know I'm no speaker, and what I have to say will be brief. So will this meetin'. There's no need of any more talk about ways and means. The new steeple will be built, and it will be worth comin' a long distance to see. I wish the tower we have could pass muster, for I feel kind of friendly toward it. It reached right up toward heaven this afternoon and plucked a brand from the burnin', and if it could have talked, you could have heard it say:

" 'Come down here, Daniel Bulger. Quit your vain and silly pastime. Come down and boost for the Lord.'

"Yes, friends, we all know it's a fright for looks, though it was an instrument in the hands of Providence today. So we must have a new one, one that will be a monument to the Daniel Bulger that died today at a quarter past two. And the new Daniel Bulger, the man before you, will foot the bill. Yes, the new Bulger, the up-to-date Bulger, the kind of Bulger my good wife thought she was marrying twenty years ago, the man she has been waitin' for all these years, this Bulger will go the limit, even to ten thousand if necessary.

"Now, some of you old park bench-warmers, that don't believe in a sudden change of heart, through the operation of the Holy Spirit, just crack that nut, if you can." Mr. Bulger was warming up, and leaning forward, used his hands to assist in emphasizing his words. The pastor smiled benignly, the heads of the civic organizations looked at one another, and there was a stir, amidst murmurs of approval, in the congregation.

"I'm proud and happy to furnish all the funds for the new tower," continued the speaker, "but there was another who, by right, ought to bear half the expense. He is the man who died today at a quarter past two. It would be only right and proper for him to pay for his own monument, besides he owes this church an apology. He wasn't a citizen worth bragging about, and it's a sure thing he wouldn't put up a cent for a cause like this. I believe in lettin' the dead rest, but I want to say that this dead one

was something of a scamp in his younger days, and there wasn't anything shady goin' on hereabouts that he wasn't mixed up in.

"He thought he played a smart prank on this church years ago, but a pillar of the church, long since dead, who had a climbin' habit, and wanted to see that the congregation was gettin' its money's worth, saw the scamp go up with somethin' he didn't come down with. Three days later, the scamp confessed, but it was too late to get at that bundle, for the steeple was shingled, and the scaffoldin' taken down. The pillar told the pastor, and Dr. Garber, like the man he is, has kept mum all these years. Well, there's nothin' fairer than the new Bulger should settle the old Bulger's honest debts, and he's goin' to do it. So far as I'm concerned, friends, this meetin's ended. Thank you for your kind attention."

But the meeting had not reached an end. The lights burned late as Bulger received the congratulations and the advice of the friends who crowded around him.

In their walk to Rennison's gate, Kummer and his friend debated warmly the theological aspect of Bulger's change of life, and the probability of its fulfilment, but at the end of their walk they came to a sudden agreement on another matter.

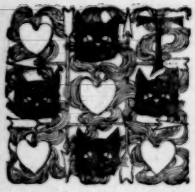
"Will you come in?" asked the cynical Rennison. Kummer glanced at Rennison's dining room, still ablaze with light, and smiled.

"Yes," he said, "I guess I will."

The Love Doctor

BY CLIFFORD A. BLACKMAN.

Do you read "Advice to heartbroken Lovers" conducted by Cupid's Aid, found in every good newspaper office? Well, here's the inside heart-throb story and romance of a first-aid-to-cupid.



THIS is the story of Dorothea Wymple, the sweetest, the wisest, the most fascinating personality in our city. I made her acquaintance by accident, and that accident began with Hannorah, the last person I expected to introduce me to a romance like Dorothea's. There is nothing in Hannorah's looks to suggest romance; but she certainly does the washing, ironing, cooking and housework for Fanny and me in a way that was never done before. We think a great deal of her. It is Hannorah who has brought back my wife's dimples and old-time light-heartedness. It is Hannorah who brings me home to supper every night whistling, knowing that all will be serene.

So it was with consternation that, in opening the kitchen door the other morning, I found Hannorah, head down on the kitchen table, sobbing on the open pages of a newspaper as if her heart would break.

"Why, Hannorah!" I cried. "What is the matter? I hope nobody is dead."

Hannorah gave me a glimpse of red nose and streaming eyes.

"Nobody's dead, peace be to their ashes," she sobbed. "It's nothin' but sintymint I'm bawling about."

"I don't understand."

"Of course ye don't. It's only a man ye are. Shure, it's this Dorothea Wymple, may Hivin shower its blessings upon her, that makes me cry."

This was my first introduction to Dorothea. The name itself attracted me, and her effect upon Hannorah's emotions made me anxious for the story.

"Do ye happen to know Maggie," continued Hannorah, "Mrs. Mallory's Maggie that lives around the corner?"

I didn't.

"Well, she's a good gurrl with a hearrt of gold. And she fell in love with the milkman's boy, him with the rosy cheeks and the toy mustache. And the sculpin', afther makin' Maggie think he's head over kittles in love with her, goes off with a baggage that smirks behind the ribbon counter at Smither's and Smather's downtown."

"But why these tears? And what has Maggie to do with this Dorothea Wymple that you spoke about?"

"And don't ye know Dorothea, sorr?" asked Hannorah in amazement. "She that advises the love-lorn in the *Marnin' Gleam?*"

I confessed my ignorance.

"Well," continued Hannorah, "Maggie was afther writin' to Dorothea, and here's the answer. I know it's right, sorr, though it's Maggie's hearrt will be broken for the while."

Hannorah mopped her tears with a corner of her apron, and handed me the paper, pointing out on the woman's page a letter to the love editor. It read:

"Dear Dorothea: The man I love has thrown me over without any reason and goes with another girl now, and I am broken hearted. When I meet him with the other

girl she is insulting to me. What shall I do? I can't stand it.

Heart-Broken."

This was Dorothea's answer:

"I am afraid there is nothing you can do, poor girl. He apparently found someone he cares for more than he does for you. You must try to comfort yourself with remembering that, if he is so unworthy, he would not have made you happy. He has behaved very badly indeed.

Dorothea."

"We-el," I ventured, "that sounds all right. I couldn't improve upon the answer, myself."

"Humph!" sniffed Hannorah. "It's a great credit ye're givin' yerself. There's niver a question about the hearrt that Dorothea can't answer. Look at the swate face of her, now."

Hannorah indicated, at the top of the column, the small cut of a sweet-faced young woman with pleasant eyes and a distracting Janice Meredith curl.

"Very sweet, Hannorah," I said, glancing at the picture, and taking out my watch. "But—I must get down town a bit early this morning and—er—"

"Shure, sorr!" replied Hannorah, coming to herself. "Here's your paper. I'll be afther gettin' breakfast this minute."

Even then I might have forgotten about Dorothea, but as I was mounting the stairs, glancing over the baseball news, my wife hailed me from above.

"Oh, Pudgy!"—I'm used to the pet name, now, so I don't mind it,—"oh Pudgy! Have you the paper?"

"Yes, dear!"

"Please may I have it a minute? I'm just dying to see it."

I gave up the paper, and went about shaving. I had hardly worked up a good lather when I heard a sniffling from my wife's dressing room; so I called to know what was the matter.

"Nothing!" she answered, half laughing. "It's just my own foolishness,—it's—it's—something men can't understand."

I went on shaving, and pretty soon, just as I expected, Fanny came to the door and told me all about it.

"You know how hateful Ethel Miller's husband has treated her?"

"No, I don't," I answered. "Tom Miller's a good fellow."

"He wouldn't stay home hardly a night," retorted my wife. "Always at the club playing pool."

"Plays a good game too," I said. But my wife passed over the remark.

"Poor Ethel was distracted. She felt she was losing her grip on her husband. She tried everything she could think of. Spoke to the pastor about him, and one or two of the deacons. Then the Ladies' Aid Society heard of the trouble, and tried to get Mr. Miller's help in suppressing neighborhood pool-rooms—sort of a hint, you know."

"Poor Tom!"

"Poor nothing! Finally—you can't guess what Ethel did?"

"Call off the pack?"

"Pudgy!"

"Excuse me, dear. What did she do?"

"She wrote to Dorothea Wymple."

"What!"

"Yes! And Dorothea told her to get a home billiard table, and invite her husband's friends to the house; and to try to learn the game herself, and interest herself in his friends, and all that, you know."

"Well, for the — say, this Dorothea runs the whole neighborhood."

"Why?"

So I related what Hannorah had told me about Maggie.

"Mrs. Mallory's Maggie?" asked my wife. "Oh, yes! She's a real nice little thing, only she gets seven dollars a week, and doesn't iron a bit well."

"But why the sniffles?"

"Ethel tried Dorothea's plan, and it works beautifully; so Ethel wrote to

thank Dorothea about it, and here's Dorothea's acknowledgment. It's so sweet. A man wouldn't understand it. It's about—about—oh, you men can't understand."

During breakfast, Fanny told me of a few more love tangles in the neighborhood that Dorothea had straightened out. Between cereal and eggs, Hannorah volunteered information about other cases. Even at the office I could not escape the influence of the young beauty with the fetching curl. I had just finished the morning correspondence when in walked Philomel Wailer, the insignificant young chap who had been with us for several years.

"Good morning, Philomel! What can I do for you?"

His face reddened.

"It's about a raise, sir. I've been with the firm for seven years, and all I'm getting is fourteen a week. Now I'm going to—that is we—I want to get married. We've waited a long time, sir, and—"

" 'Fraid you'll find it hard sledding on fourteen per?"

"Yes, sir!"

"Does the fact that you want to get married justify an increase in your salary?"

Philomel was game. He looked me squarely in the eye, his face a shade or two redder.

"You'll think it foolish, sir, but my girl she wrote to this Dorothea Wymple—"

"What! Again!"

"Yes, sir! And my girl told how I've worked here seven years without being late or absent once, and how I've learned to take dictation on the typewriter from your graphophone, and how I've been here so long I know all about the firm's business"—I nearly choked at this—"and how we're tired of waiting, but can't get married on my salary. Then Dorothea wrote back to have me ask my employer for a raise, and tell him how faithful I've been and—and all that. So I've done it."

"And you've done it well, Philomel. We appreciate your services. Do you suppose you and the young lady could scratch along on—twenty dollars a week?"

"Twenty, sir!"

"Did you expect more?"

"Twenty, sir! Why, we could build on that!"

"Well, when you're ready, take a month for the honeymoon. When you come back there'll be a place for you in the inside office. We need a man there who knows the firm's business. Tut! Tut! Don't thank me. The responsible person appeared to be that Wymple lady."

Poor Philomel! He fairly beamed devotion on me when I passed him on my way out to lunch an hour or so later. I was still smiling over it, and over the persistency with which the sweet-faced Dorothea of the fetching curl haunted me that day when, chancing to look up at the bulletin of the *Morning Gleam* I saw a stout young man in the doorway.

He was one of those big round fellows with plump rosy cheeks and shining blue eyes,—a person of excellent digestion and amiable humor. When such a man looks glum the phenomenon is worth noticing, and that is why I looked at him a second time, and recognized an old college friend.

"Billy Turtle!" I cried.

Sure enough it was Billy, expanded to twice his college-day size, but the same old Billy. I insisted upon his going to lunch with me.

"Well, Billy," I remarked, "you're looking prosperous. What are you doing?"

"Newspaper work."

"Good! You always did have a knack with the pen. Reporting, editing, or sports?"

"Just—er—well, sort of special writing, you know."

He seemed so embarrassed that I changed the subject.

"Married yet?"

He sighed, and looked melancholy.

"Ah, ha! A love affair! It can't be still Sadie Lincoln?"

He nodded.

"I thought you folks would get married long ago."

More sighs.

"Engaged?"

"No!"

"Quarreled?"

"No!"

"Well, for the—excuse me, Billy, but what *is* the matter? Can't she cook?"

"Cook? Say, you ought to taste her bread and apple pies! And roast? Why, she could roast a snow ball to a turn. I've seen her in the kitchen make things up out of her head without looking at a cook-book or measuring anything. Just throws 'em together, you know. A natural cook!"

"Then, why don't you take her?"

"Oh, it's no use! We've been going together so long I'd hate to have her refuse me, though I guess she likes me. Only—oh, I dunno!"

"Say, Billy," said I, sitting back and regarding him shrewdly, "there's just one thing for you to do: write to Dorothea Wymple!"

Billy started.

"Hush! Not so loud!" he whispered.

"Nonsense! That woman runs the emotions of half this city. She knows all about love."

"Sh! Not so loud!"

"What's up?"

"Come to the Press Club where we can be alone. But, for Heaven's sake, keep quiet!"

Bewildered, I tiptoed out of the dining room with Billy, to a secluded nook in the Press Club.

"Now," he asked, facing me, "why did you say that?"

"What?"

"About Dorothea Wymple."

"Oh! Why she's the love doctor of the city. Guides the destiny of every lover, married couple and old maid, within the radius of the *Morning Gleam*. What makes you so touchy about it?"

"Nothing! Only—I am Dorothea Wymple!"

I stared at Billy Turtle's round rosy face.

"You!" I gasped. "But—but where's the curl?"

Billy blushed.

"That," he explained, "the picture, you know, that's one we got from some patent medicine people. The woman who used to write the column ran away from her husband a year ago, and the managing editor asked me to fill in for a day. I was such a hit that he made me keep the job. And, do you know, it's great sport!"

Oh, Hannorah! Oh, Fanny! Oh, Philomel! Your tears, your prayers of gratitude, the source of your tenderest sentiment is only "great sport."

"I should think it might be," I remarked, "if your constitution is good. But why don't you try some of your own advice?"

"I'd like to, but—but—"

"See here, Billy," said I. "Let me Wympleize for a minute. You go straight home, put on the last Christmas necktie Sadie gave you, go to her house, take her in your arms, tell her you love her to pieces, and get it over with."

Billy stared at me, dumfounded. Then his face lighted up. He seized my hand and shook it earnestly.

"I'll do it." He cried. "I'll do it."

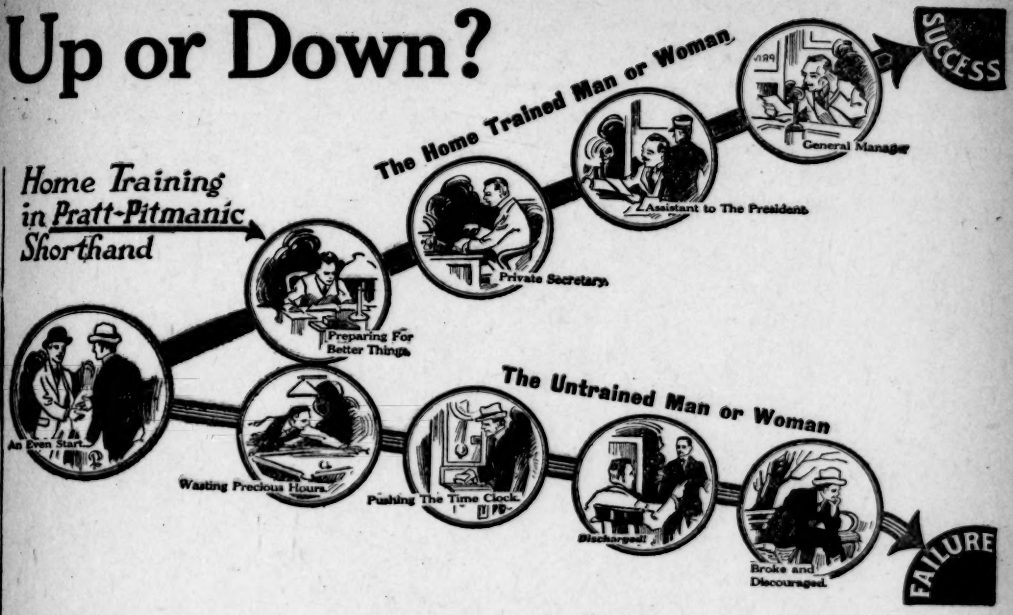
And he did. He called me up at the

office the next morning, chortling so with happiness that I could hardly understand him. That night, when I reached home, I wore such a broad smile that my wife remarked upon it, and Hannorah looked at me, wondering "What ailed the man, now?"

"What's up, Pudgy?" asked Fanny. "Made a million?"

"Not yet!" I said. "But don't mention Dorothea Wymple to me any more. She's not in my—oh, well! What's the use? You women wouldn't understand, anyway."

Up or Down?



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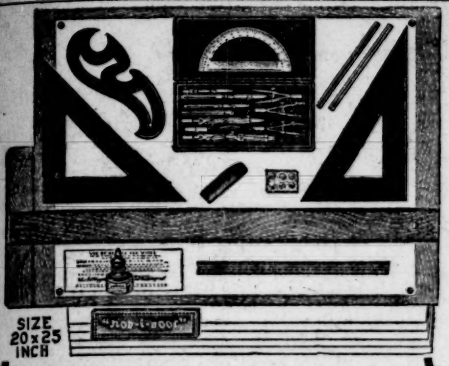

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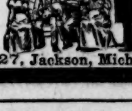

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